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The Shorter Works of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu - 1848-1853

LONDON:
HURST & BLACKETT, 13, GT. MARLBOROUGH ST., W.

OXFORD: SLATTER & ROSE.—CAMBRIDGE: HARRY JOHNSON.
LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER, & BIRMINGHAM: W. H. SMITH & SON.
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ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.—ST. ANDREWS: W. C. HENDERSON.
PARIS: J. G. FOTHERINGHAM.—NEW YORK: AUG. BRENTANO.
MELBOURNE: G. ROBERTSON.

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Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (from the *Dublin University Magazine* unless noted otherwise)

Some Account of the Latter Days of the Hon. Richard Marston of Dunoran 1848 (v31 Apr-June)
as The Evil Guest 1851 *in* Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery
The State Prosecutions 1848 (v31 June)
The Irish League 1848 (v32 July)
The Mysterious Lodger 1850 (v35 Jan-Feb)
Billy Malowney's Taste of Love and Glory 1850 (v35 June)
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Some Strange Disturbances in an Old House in Aungier Street 1853 (v42 Dec)
as An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street 1923 *in* Madam Crowl's Ghost

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LATTER DAYS OF THE HON. RICHARD MARSTON, OF DUNORAN.

PART I.

"When Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death."

About sixty years ago, and somewhat more than twenty miles from the capital of Ireland, in a southward direction, there stood a large, and, even then, an old-fashioned mansion-house. It lay in the midst of a demesne of considerable extent, and richly wooded with venerable timber; but, apart from the sombre majesty of these giant groups, and the varieties of the undulating ground on which they stood, there was little that could be deemed attractive in the place. A certain air of neglect and decay, and an indescribable gloom and melancholy, hung over it. In darkness, it seemed darker than any tract beside; when the moonlight fell upon its glades and hollows, they looked spectral and awful, with a sort of churchyard loneliness; and even when the blush of morning kissed its broad woodlands, there was a melancholy in the salute which saddened rather than cheered the heart of the beholder.

This antique, melancholy, and neglected place, we shall call, for distinctness sake, Dunoran. It was then the property of the younger son of a nobleman, once celebrated for his ability and his daring, but who had long since passed to that land where human wisdom and courage avail nought. The representative of this noble house resided at the family mansion in England, and the cadet, whose fortunes we mean to sketch in these pages, lived upon the narrow surplus of an encumbered income, in a reserved and unsocial discontent, deep among the solemn shadows of the old woods of Dunoran.

The Hon. Richard Marston was now somewhere between forty and fifty years of age—perhaps nearer the latter; he still, however, preserved, in an eminent degree, the traits of manly beauty, not the less remarkable for its unquestionably haughty and passionate character. He had married a beautiful girl, of good family, but without much money, somewhere about sixteen years before; and two children, a son and a daughter, had been the fruit of this union. The boy, Harry Marston, was at this time at Cambridge; and his sister, scarcely fifteen, was at home with her parents, and under the training of an accomplished governess, who had been recommended to them by a noble relative of Mrs. Marston. She was a native of France, but thoroughly mistress of the English language, and, except for a foreign accent, which gave a certain prettiness to all she said, she spoke it as perfectly as any native Englishwoman. This young Frenchwoman was eminently handsome and attractive. Expressive, dark eyes, a clear olive complexion, small even teeth, and a beautifully-dimpling smile, more perhaps than a strictly classic regularity of features, were the secrets of her unquestionable influence, at first sight, upon the fancy of every man of taste who beheld her.

Mr. Marston's fortune, never very large, had been shattered by early dissipation. Naturally of a proud and somewhat exacting temper, he acutely felt the mortifying consequences of his poverty. The want of what he felt ought to have been his position and influence in the county in which he resided, fretted and galled him; and he cherished a resentful and bitter sense of every slight, imaginary or real, to which the same fruitful source of annoyance and humiliation had exposed him. He held, therefore, but little intercourse with the surrounding gentry, and that little not of the pleasantest possible kind; for, not being himself in a condition to entertain, in that style which his own ideas of his station had led him to conceive to be but suitable, he declined, as far as was compatible with good breeding, all the proffered hospitalities of the neighbourhood; and, from his wild and neglected park, looked out upon the surrounding world in a spirit of moroseness and defiance, very unlike, indeed, to that of neighbourly good-will.

In the midst, however, of many of the annoyances attendant upon crippled means, he enjoyed a few of those shadowy indications of hereditary importance, which are more dearly prized, in proportion as the substantial accessories of wealth have disappeared. The mansion in which he dwelt was, though old-fashioned, imposing in its aspect, and upon a scale unequivocally aristocratic; its walls were hung with ancestral portraits, and he managed to maintain about him a large and tolerably respectable staff of servants. In addition to these, he had his extensive demesne, his deer-park, and his unrivalled timber, wherewith to console himself; and, in the consciousness of these possessions, he found some imperfect assuagement of those bitter feelings of suppressed scorn and resentment, which a sense of lost station and slighted importance engendered.

Mr. Marston's early habits had, unhappily, been of a kind to aggravate, rather than alleviate, the annoyances incidental to reduced means. He had been a gay man, a voluptuary, and a gambler. His vicious tastes had survived the means of their gratification. His love for his wife had been nothing more than one of those vehement and headstrong fancies, which, in self-indulgent men, sometimes result in marriage, and which seldom outlive the first few months of that life-long connexion. Mrs. Marston was a gentle, noble-minded woman. After agonies of disappointment, which none ever suspected, she had at length learned to submit, in sad and gentle acquiescence, to her fate. Those feelings, which had been the charm of her young days, were gone, and, as she bitterly felt, for ever. For them there was no recall—they could not return; and, without complaint or reproach, she yielded to what she felt was inevitable. It was impossible to look at Mrs. Marston, and not to discern, at a glance, the ruin of a surpassingly beautiful woman—a good deal wasted, pale, and chastened with a deep, untold sorrow—but still possessing the outlines, both in face and form, of that noble beauty and matchless grace, which had made her, in happier days, the admired of all observers. But equally impossible was it to converse with her, for even a minute, without hearing, in the gentle and melancholy music of her voice, the sad echoes of those griefs to which her early beauty had been sacrificed—an undying sense of lost love, and happiness departed, never to come again.

One morning, Mr. Marston had walked, as was his custom when he expected the messenger who brought from the neighbouring post-office the Dublin letters, some way down the broad, straight avenue, with its double rows of lofty trees at each side, when he encountered the nimble emissary on his return. He took the letter-bag in silence. It contained but two letters—one addressed to "Mademoiselle de Barras, chez M. Marston," and the other to himself. He took them both, dismissed the messenger, and opening that addressed to himself, read as follows, while he slowly retraced his steps towards the house:—

"Dear Richard—I am a whimsical fellow, as you doubtless remember, and have lately grown, they tell me, rather hippish besides. I do not know to which infirmity I am to attribute a sudden fancy which urges me to pay you a visit, if you will admit me. To say truth, my dear Dick, I wish to see a little of Ireland, and, I will confess it, *en passant*, to see a little of *you* too. I really wish to make acquaintance with your family; and though they tell me my health is very much shaken, I must say, in self-defence, I am not a troublesome inmate. I can perfectly take care of myself, and need no nursing or caudling whatever. Will you present this, my petition, to Mrs. Marston, and report her decision thereon to me. Seriously, I know that your house may be full, or some other *contre-temps* may make it impracticable for me just now to invade you. If it be so, tell me, my dear Richard, frankly, as my movements are perfectly free, and my time all my own, so that I can arrange my visit to suit your convenience.

"Yours, &c.,

"Wynston E. Berkley.

"P.S.—Direct to me at —— Hotel, in Dublin, as I shall probably be there by the time this reaches you."

"Ill-bred and pushing as ever," quoth Mr. Marston, angrily, as he thrust the unwelcome letter into his pocket.

"This fellow, wallowing in wealth, without one nearer relative on earth than I, and associated more nearly still with me by the—psha! not affection—the *recollections* of early and intimate companionship, leaves me unaided, for years of desertion and suffering, to the buffetings of the world, and the troubles of all but overwhelming pecuniary difficulties, and now, with the cool confidence of one entitled to respect and welcome, invites himself to my house. Coming here," he continued, after a gloomy pause, and still pacing slowly toward the house, "to collect amusing materials for next season's gossip—stories about the married Benedict—the bankrupt beau—the outcast tenant of an Irish wilderness;" and, as he said this, he looked at the neglected prospect before him with an eye almost of hatred. "Ay, ay, to see the nakedness of the land is he coming, but he shall be disappointed. His money may buy him a cordial welcome at an inn, but curse me if it shall purchase him a reception here."

He again opened and glanced through the letter.

"Ay, purposely put in such a way that I can't decline it without affronting him," he continued doggedly. "Well, then, he has no one to blame but himself—affronted he shall be; I shall effectually put an end to this humorous excursion. Egad, it is rather hard if a man cannot keep his poverty to himself."

Sir Wynston Berkley was a baronet of large fortune—a selfish, fashionable man, and an inveterate bachelor. He and Marston had been schoolfellows, and the violent and implacable temper of the former had as little impressed his companion with feelings of regard, as the frivolity and selfishness of the baronet had won the esteem of his relative. As boys, they had little in common upon which to rest the basis of a friendship, or even a mutual liking. Berkley was gay, cold, and satirical; his cousin—for cousins they were—was jealous, haughty, and relentless. Their negative disinclination to one another's society, not unnaturally engendered by uncongenial and unamiable dispositions, had for a time given place to actual hostility, while the two young men were at Oxford. In some intrigue, Marston discovered in his cousin a too-successful rival; the consequence was, a bitter and furious quarrel, which, but for the prompt and peremptory interference of friends, Marston would undoubtedly have pushed to a bloody issue. Time had, however, healed this rupture, and the young men came to regard one another with the same feelings, and eventually to re-establish the same sort of cold and indifferent intimacy which had subsisted between them before their angry collision.

Under these circumstances, whatever suspicion Marston might have felt on the receipt of the unexpected, and indeed unaccountable proposal, which had just reached him, he certainly had little reason to complain of any violation of early friendship in the neglect with which Sir Wynston had hitherto treated him. In deciding to decline his proposed visit, however, Marston had not consulted the impulses of spite or anger. He knew the baronet well; he knew that he cherished no good-will towards him, and that in the project which he had thus unexpectedly broached, whatever indirect or selfish motives might possibly be at the bottom of it, no friendly feeling had ever mingled. He was therefore resolved to avoid the trouble and the expense of a visit in all respects distasteful to him, and in a gentlemanlike way, but, at the same time, as the reader may suppose, with very little anxiety as to whether or not his gay correspondent should take offence at his reply, to decline, once for all, the proposed distinction.

With this resolution, he entered the spacious and somewhat dilapidated mansion which called him master; and entering a sitting-room, appropriated to his daughter's use, he found her there, in company with her beautiful French governess. He kissed his child, and saluted her young preceptress with formal courtesy.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "I have got a letter for you; and, Rhoda," he continued, addressing his pretty daughter, "bring this to your mother, and say, I request her to read it."

He gave her the letter he himself had just received, and the girl tripped lightly away upon her mission.

Had he narrowly scrutinized the countenance of the fair Frenchwoman, as she glanced at the direction of that

which he had just placed in *her* hand, he might have seen certain transient, but very unmistakeable evidences of excitement and agitation. She quickly concealed the letter, however, and with a sigh, the momentary flush which it had called to her cheek subsided, and she was tranquil as usual.

Mr. Marston remained for some minutes—five, eight, or ten, we cannot say precisely—pretty much where he had stood on first entering the chamber, doubtless awaiting the return of his messenger, or the appearance of his wife. At length, however, he left the room himself to seek her; but, during his brief stay, his previous resolution had been removed. By what influence we cannot say; but removed completely it unquestionably was, and a final determination that Sir Wynston Berkley should become his guest had fixedly taken its place.

As Marston walked along the passages which led from this room, he encountered Mrs. Marston and his daughter.

"Well," said he, "you have read Wynston's letter?"

"Yes," she replied, returning it to him; "and what answer, Richard, do you purpose giving him?"

She was about to hazard a conjecture, but checked herself, remembering that even so faint an evidence of a disposition to advise might possibly be resented by her cold and imperious lord.

"I have considered it, and decided to receive him," he replied.

"Ah! I am afraid—that is, I hope—he may find our housekeeping such as he can enjoy," she said, with an involuntary expression of surprise; for she had scarcely had a doubt that her husband would have preferred evading the visit of his fine friend, under his gloomy circumstances.

"If our modest fare does not suit him," said Marston, with sullen bitterness, "he can depart as easily as he came. We, poor gentlemen, can but do our best. I have thought it over, and made up my mind."

"And how soon, my dear Richard, do you intend fixing his arrival?" she inquired, with the natural uneasiness of one upon whom, in an establishment whose pretensions considerably exceeded its resources, the perplexing cares of housekeeping devolved.

"Why, as soon as he pleases," replied he. "I suppose you can easily have his room prepared by to-morrow or next day. I shall write by this mail, and tell him to come down at once."

Having said this in a cold, decisive way, he turned and left her, as it seemed, not caring to be teased with further questions. He took his solitary way to a distant part of his wild park, where, far from the likelihood of disturbance or intrusion, he was often wont to amuse himself for the live-long day, in the sedentary sport of shooting rabits. And there we leave him for the present, signifying to the distant inmates of his house the industrious pursuit of his unsocial occupation, by the dropping fire which sullenly, from hour to hour, echoed from the remote woods.

Mrs. Marston issued her orders; and having set on foot all the necessary preparations for so unwonted an event as a visit of some duration to Dunoran, she betook herself to her little boudoir—the scene of many an hour of patient but bitter suffering, unseen by human eye, and unknown, except to the just Searcher of hearts, to whom belongs mercy and VENGEANCE.

Mrs. Marston had but two friends to whom she had ever spoken upon the subject nearest her heart—the estrangement of her husband, a sorrow to which even time had failed to reconcile her. From her children this grief was carefully concealed. To them she never uttered the semblance of a complaint. Anything that could by possibility have reflected blame or dishonour upon their father, she would have perished rather than have allowed them so much as to suspect. The two friends who did understand her feelings, though in different degrees, were, one, a good and venerable clergyman, the Rev. Doctor Danvers, a frequent visitor and occasional guest at Dunoran, where his simple manners and unaffected benignity and tenderness of heart, had won the love of all, with the exception of its master, and commanded even his respect. The second was no other than the young French governess, Mademoiselle de Barras, in whose ready sympathy and consolatory counsels she found no small happiness. The society of this young lady had indeed become,

next to that of her daughter, her greatest comfort and pleasure.

Mademoiselle de Barras was of a noble though ruined French family, and a certain nameless elegance and dignity attested, spite of her fallen condition, the purity of her descent. She was accomplished—possessed of that fine perception and sensitiveness, and that ready power of self-adaptation to the peculiarities and moods of others, which we term tact—and was, moreover, gifted with a certain natural grace, and manners the most winning imaginable. In short, she was a fascinating companion; and when the melancholy circumstances of her own situation, and the sad history of her once rich and noble family, were taken into account, with her striking attractions of person and air, the combination of all these associations and impressions rendered her one of the most interesting persons that could well be imagined. The circumstances of Mademoiselle de Barras's history and descent seemed to warrant, on Mrs. Marston's part, a closer intimacy and confidence than usually subsists between parties mutually occupying such a relation.

Mrs. Marston had hardly established herself in this little apartment, when a light foot approached, a gentle tap was given at the door, and Mademoiselle de Barras entered.

"Ah, mademoiselle, so kind—such pretty flowers. Pray sit down," said the lady, with a sweet and grateful smile, as she took from the taper fingers of the foreigner the little bouquet which she had been at the pains to gather.

Mademoiselle sat down, and gently took the lady's hand and kissed it. A small matter will overflow a heart charged with sorrow—a chance word, a look, some little office of kindness—and so it was with mademoiselle's bouquet and gentle kiss. Mrs. Marston's heart was touched; her eyes filled with bright tears; she smiled gratefully upon her fair and humble companion, and as she smiled, her tears overflowed, and she wept in silence for some minutes.

"My poor mademoiselle," she said, at last, "you are so very, very kind."

Mademoiselle said nothing; she lowered her eyes, and pressed the poor lady's hand.

Apparently to interrupt an embarrassing silence, and to give a more cheerful tone to their little interview, the governess, in a gay tone, on a sudden said—

"And so, madame, we are to have a visitor, Miss Rhoda tells me—a baronet, is he not?"

"Yes, indeed, mademoiselle—Sir Wynston Berkley, a gay London gentleman, and a cousin of Mr. Marston's," she replied.

"Ha—a cousin!" exclaimed the young lady, with a little more surprise in her tone than seemed altogether called for—"a cousin—oh, then, that is the reason of his visit. Do, pray, madame, tell me all about him—I am so much afraid of strangers, and what you call men of the world. Oh, dear Mrs. Marston, I am not worthy to be here, and he will see all that in a moment—indeed, indeed, I am afraid. Pray tell me all about him."

She said this with a simplicity which made the elder lady smile, and while mademoiselle re-adjusted the tiny flowers which formed the bouquet she had just presented to her, Mrs. Marston good-naturedly recounted to her all she knew of Sir Wynston Berkley, which, in substance, amounted to no more than we have already stated. When she concluded, the young Frenchwoman continued for some time silent, still busy with her flowers. But, suddenly, she heaved a deep sigh, and shook her head.

"You seem disquieted, mademoiselle," said Mrs. Marston, in a tone of kindness.

"I am thinking, madame," she said, still looking upon the flowers which she was adjusting, and again sighing profoundly—"I am thinking of what you said to me a week ago—alas!"

"I do not remember what it was, my good mademoiselle—nothing, I am sure, that ought to grieve you—at least nothing that was intended to have that effect," replied the lady, in a tone of gentle encouragement.

"No, not intended, madame," said the young Frenchwoman, sorrowfully.

"Well, what was it? Perhaps you misunderstood; perhaps I can explain what I said," replied Mrs. Marston, affectionately.

'Ah, madame, you think—you think I am *unlucky*," answered the young lady, slowly and faintly.

"Unlucky! Dear mademoisellle,

you surprise me," rejoined her companion.

"I mean—what I mean is this, madame—you date unhappiness—if not its beginning, at least its great aggravation and increase," she answered dejectedly, "from the time of my coming here, madame; and though I know you are too good to dislike me on that account, yet I must, in your eyes, be ever connected with calamity, and look like some ominous thing."

"Dear mademoiselle, allow no such thought to enter your mind. You do me great wrong, indeed you do," said Mrs. Marston, laying her hand upon the young lady's, kindly.

There was silence for a little time, and the elder lady resumed—

"I remember now what you allude to, dear mademoiselle—the increased estrangement, the widening separation which severs me from one unutterably dear to me—the first and bitter disappointment of my life, which seems to grow more hopelessly incurable day by day.

Mrs. Marston paused, and, after a brief silence, the governess said—

"I am very superstitious myself, dear madame, and I thought I must have seemed to you an inauspicious inmate—in short, *unlucky*—as I have said; and the thought made me very unhappy—so unhappy, that I was going to leave you, madame—I may now tell you frankly—going away; but you have set my doubts at rest, and I am quite happy again."

"Dear mademoiselle!" cried the lady tenderly, and rising, as she spake, to kiss the cheek of her humble friend; "never—never speak of this again. God knows I have too few friends on earth, to spare the kindest and tenderest among them all. No, no. You little think what comfort I have found in your warm-hearted and ready sympathy, and how dearly I prize your affection, my poor mademoiselle."

The young Frenchwoman rose, with downcast eyes, and a dimpling, happy smile; and, as Mrs. Marston drew her affectionately toward her, and kissed her, she timidly returned the embrace of her kind patroness. For a moment her graceful arms encircled her, and she whispered, "Dear madame, how happy—how very happy you make me."

Had Ithuriel touched with his spear the beautiful young woman, thus for a moment, as it seemed, lost in a trance of gratitude and love, would that angelic form have stood the test unscathed? A spectator, marking the scene, might have observed a strange gleam in her eyes—a strange expression in her face—an influence for a moment *not* angelic, like a shadow of some passing spirit, cross her visibly, as she leaned over the gentle lady's neck, and murmured, "Dear madame, how happy—how very happy you make me." Such a spectator, as he looked at that gentle lady, might have seen, for one dreamy moment, a lithe and painted serpent, coiled round and and round, and hissing in her ear.

A few minutes more, and mademoiselle was in the solitude of her own apartment. She shut and bolted the door, and taking from her desk the letter which she had that morning received, threw herself into an armchair, and studied the document profoundly. Her actual revision and scrutiny of the letter itself was interrupted by long intervals of profound abstraction; and, after a full hour thus spent, she locked it carefully up again, and with a clear brow, and a gay smile, rejoined her pretty pupil for a walk.

We must now pass over an interval of a few days, and come at once to the arrival of Sir Wynston Berkley, which duly occurred upon the evening of the day appointed. The baronet descended from his chaise but a little time before the hour at which the little party which formed the family at Dunoran were wont to assemble for the social meal of supper. A few minutes devoted to the mysteries of the toilet, with the aid of an accomplished valet, enabled him to appear, as he conceived, without disadvantage at this domestic re-union.

Sir Wynston Berkley was a particularly gentlemanlike person. He was rather tall, and elegantly made, with gay, easy manners, and something indefinably aristocratic in his face, which, however, was a little more worn than his years would have strictly accounted for. But Sir Wynston had been a *roué*, and, spite of the cleverest possible making up, the ravages of excess were very traceable in the lively beau of fifty. Perfectly well dressed, and with a manner that was ease and

gaiety itself, he was at home from the moment he entered the room. Of course, anything like genuine cordiality was out of the question; but Mr. Marston embraced his relative with perfect good breeding, and the baronet appeared determined to like everybody, and be pleased with everything.

He had not been five minutes in the parlour, chatting gaily with Mr. and Mrs. Marston and their pretty daughter, when Mademoiselle de Barras entered the room. As she moved towards Mrs. Marston, Sir Wynston rose, and, observing her with evident admiration, said in an under-tone, inquiringly, to Marston, who was beside him—

"And *this*?"

"That is Mademoiselle de Barras, my daughter's governess, and Mrs. Marston's companion," said Marston, drily.

"Ha!" said Sir Wynston—"I *thought* you were but three at home just now, and I was right. Your son is at Cambridge; I heard so from an old friend, Jack Manbury. Jack has his boy, there, too. D—n me, Dick, it seems but last week that you and I were there together."

"Yes," said Marston, looking gloomily into the fire, as if he saw, in its smoke and flicker, the phantoms of murdered time and opportunity; "but I hate looking back, Wynston. The past is to me but a medley of ill-luck and worse management."

"Why what an ungrateful dog you are!" returned Sir Wynston, gaily, turning his back upon the fire, and glancing round the spacious and handsome, though somewhat faded apartment. "I was on the point of congratulating you on the possession of the finest park and noblest demesne in Ireland, when you begin to *grumble*. Egad, Dick, all I can say to your complaint is, that *I* don't pity you, and there are dozens who may honestly *envy* you—that is all."

In spite of this cheering assurance, Marston remained sullenly silent. Supper, however, had now been served, and the little party assumed their places at the table.

"I am sorry, Wynston, I have no sport of any kind to offer you here," said Marston, "except, indeed, some good trout-fishing, if you like it. I have three miles of excellent fishing at your command."

"My dear fellow, I am a mere cockney," rejoined Sir Wynston; "I am not a sportsman; I never tried it, and should not like to begin now. No, Dick—what I much prefer is, abundance of your fresh air, and the enjoyment of your scenery. When I was at Rouen three years ago——"

"Ha!—Rouen? Mademoiselle will feel an interest in that—it is her birthplace," interrupted Marston, glancing at the Frenchwoman.

"Yes—Rouen—ah—yes!" said mademoiselle, with very evident embarrassment.

Sir Wynston appeared for a moment a little disconcerted, too, but rallied speedily, and pursued his detail of his doings at that fair town of Normandy.

Marston knew Sir Wynston well; and he rightly calculated that whatever effect his experience of the world might have had in intensifying his selfishness or hardening his heart, it certainly could have had none in improving a character originally worthless and unfeeling. He knew, moreover, that his wealthy cousin was gifted with a great deal of that small cunning which is available for masking the little scheming of frivolous and worldly men; and that Sir Wynston never took trouble of any kind without a sufficient purpose, having its centre in his own personal gratification.

This visit greatly puzzled Marston; it gave him even a vague sense of uneasiness. Could there exist any flaw in his own title to the estate of Dunoran? He had an unpleasant, doubtful sort of remembrance of some apprehensions of this kind, when he was but a child, having been whispered in the family. Could this really be so, and could the baronet have been led to make this unexpected visit merely for the purpose of personally examining into the condition of a property of which he was about to become the legal invader? The nature of this suspicion affords, at all events, a fair guage of Marston's estimate of his cousin's character. And as he revolved these doubts from time to time, and as the thought of Mademoiselle de Barras's transient, but unaccountable, embarrassment at the mention of Rouen by Sir Wynston—an embarrassment

which the baronet himself appeared for a moment to reciprocate—flashed occasionally upon his remembrance, undefined, glimmering suspicions of another kind flickered through the darkness of his mind. He was effectually puzzled—his surmises and conjectures baffled; and he more than half repented that he had acceded to his cousin's proposal, and admitted him as an inmate in his house.

Although Sir Wynston comported himself as if he were conscious of being the very most-welcome visitor who could possibly have established himself at Dunoran, he was, doubtless, fully aware of the real feelings with which he was regarded by his host. If he had in reality an object in prolonging his stay, and wished to make the postponement of his departure the direct interest of his entertainer, he unquestionably took effectual measures for that purpose.

The little party broke up every evening at about ten o'clock, and Sir Wynston retired to his chamber at the same hour. He found little difficulty in inducing Marston to amuse him there with a quiet game of picquet. In his own room, therefore, in the luxurious ease of dressing-gown and slippers he sate at cards with his host, often until an hour or two past midnight. Sir Wynston was exorbitantly wealthy, and very reckless in expenditure. The stakes for which they played, although they gradually became in reality pretty heavy, were in his eyes a very unimportant consideration. Marston, on the other hand, was poor, and played with the eye of a lynx and the appetite of a shark. The ease and perfect good-humour with which Sir Wynston lost were not unimproved by his entertainer, who, as may readily be supposed, was not sorry to reap this golden harvest, provided without the slightest sacrifice, on his part, of pride or independence. If, indeed, he sometimes suspected that his guest was a little more anxious to lose than to win, he was also quite resolved not to perceive it, but calmly persisted in, night after night, giving Sir Wynston, as he termed it, his revenge; or, in other words, treating him to a repetition of his losses. All this was very agreeable to Marston, who began to treat his visitor with, at all events, more external cordiality and distinction than at first.

An incident, however, occurred, which disturbed these amicable relations in an unexpected way. It becomes necessary here to mention that Mademoiselle de Barras's sleeping apartment opened from a long corridor. It was *en suite* with two dressing-rooms, each opening also upon the corridor, but wholly unused and unfurnished. Some five or six other apartments also opened at either side, upon the same passage. These little local details being premised, it so happened that one day Marston, who had gone out with the intention of angling in the trout-stream which flowed through his park, though at a considerable distance from the house, having unexpectedly returned to procure some tackle which he had forgotten, was walking briskly through the corridor in question to his own apartment, when, to his surprise, the door of one of the deserted dressing-rooms, of which we have spoken, was cautiously pushed open, and Sir Wynston Berkley issued from it. Marston was almost beside him as he did so, and Sir Wynston made a motion as if about instinctively to draw back again, and at the same time the keen ear of his host distinctly caught the sound of rustling silks and a tip-toe tread hastily withdrawing from the deserted chamber. Sir Wynston looked nearly as much confused as a man of the world can look. Marston stopped short, and scanned his visitor for a moment with a very peculiar expression.

"You have caught me peeping, Dick. I am an inveterate explorer," said the baronet, with an ineffectual effort to shake off his embarrassment. "An open door in a fine old house is a temptation which ——"

"That door is usually closed, and ought to be kept so," interrupted Marston, drily; "there is nothing whatever to be seen in the room but dust and cobwebs."

"Pardon me," said Sir Wynston, more easily, "you forget the view from the window."

"Ay, the view, to be sure; there is a good view from it," said Marston, with as much of his usual manner as he could resume so soon; and, at the same time, carelessly opening the door

again, he walked in, accompanied by Sir Wynston, and both stood at the window together, looking out in silence upon a prospect which neither of them saw.

"Yes, I do think it is a good view," said Marston; and as he turned carelessly away, he darted a swift glance round the chamber. The door opening toward the French lady's apartment was closed, but not actually shut. This was enough; and as they left the room, Marston repeated his invitation to his guest to accompany him; but in a tone which showed that he scarcely followed the meaning of what he himself was saying.

He walked undecidedly toward his own room, then turned and went down stairs. In the hall he met his pretty child—

"Ha! Rhoda," said he, "you have not been out to-day?"

"No, papa; but it is so very fine, I think I shall go now."

"Yes; go, and mademoiselle can accompany you. Do you hear, Rhoda, mademoiselle goes with you, and you had better go at once."

A few minutes more, and Marston, from the parlour-window, beheld Rhoda and the elegant French girl walking together towards the woodlands. He watched them gloomily, himself unseen, until the crowding underwood concealed their receding figures. Then, with a sigh, he turned and reascended the great staircase.

"I shall sift this mystery to the bottom," thought he. "I shall foil the conspirators, if so they be, with their own weapons—art with art—chicane with chicane—duplicity with duplicity."

He was now in the long passage which we have just spoken of, and glancing back and before him, to ascertain that no chance eye discerned him, he boldly entered mademoiselle's chamber. Her writing-desk lay upon the table. It was locked; and coolly taking it in his hands, Marston carried it into his own room, bolted his chamber-door, and taking two or three bunches of keys, he carefully tried nearly a dozen in succession, and when almost despairing of success, at last found one which fitted the lock, turned it, and opened the desk.

Sustained throughout his dishonourable task by some strong and angry passion, the sight of the open escrutoire checked and startled him for a moment. Violated privilege, invaded secrecy, base, perfidious espionage, upbraided and stigmatized him, as the intricacies of the outraged sanctuary opened upon his intrusive gaze. He felt for a moment shocked and humbled. He was impelled to lock and replace the desk where he had originally found it, without having effected his meditated treason; but this hesitation was transient; the fiery and reckless impulse which had urged him to the act, returned to enforce its consummation. With a guilty eye and eager hands, he searched the contents of this tiny repository of the fair Norman's written secrets.

"Ha! the very thing," he muttered, as he detected the identical letter which he himself had handed to Mademoiselle de Barras but a few days before. "The handwriting struck me—ill-disguised—I thought I knew it; we shall see."

He had opened the letter; it contained but a few lines: he held his breath while he read it. First he grew pale, then a shadow came over his face, and then another, and another—darker and darker—shade upon shade—as if an exhalation from the pit was momentarily blackening the air about him. He said nothing; there was but one long, gentle sigh, and in his face a mortal sternness, as he folded the letter again, replaced it, and locked the desk.

Of course, when Mademoiselle de Barras returned from her accustomed walk, she found everything in her room, to all appearance, undisturbed, and just as when she left it. While this young lady was making her toilet for the evening, and while Sir Wynston Berkley was worrying himself with conjectures as to whether Marston's evil looks, when he encountered him that morning in the passage, existed only in his own fancy, or were, in good truth, very grim and significant realities, Marston himself was striding alone through the wildest and darkest solitudes of his park, haunted by his own unholy thoughts, and, it may be, by those other evil and unearthly influences which wander, as we know, "in desert places." Darkness overtook him, and the chill of night, in these lonely tracts. In his

solitary walk, what fearful *company* had he been keeping! As the shades of night deepened round him, the sense of the neighbourhood of ill—the consciousness of the foul thoughts of which, where he was now treading, he had been for hours the sport—oppressed him with a vague and unknown terror; a certain horror of the thoughts which had been his comrades through the day, which he could not now shake off, and which clung to him with a ghastly and defiant tenacity, scared, while they half-enraged him. He stalked swiftly homewards, like a guilty man pursued.

Marston was not perfectly satisfied, though very nearly, with the evidence now in his possession. The letter, the stolen perusal of which had so agitated him that day, bore no signature; but, independently of the handwriting, which seemed to be, spite of the constraint of an attempted disguise, to be familiar to his eye, there existed in the matter of the letter, short as it was, certain internal evidences, which, although not actually conclusive, raised certainly, in conjunction with all the other circumstances, a powerful presumption in aid of his suspicions. He resolved, however, to sift the matter further, and to bide his time. Meanwhile, his manner must indicate no trace of his dark surmises and bitter thoughts. Deception, in its two great branches, simulation and *dis*simulation, was easy to him. His habitual reserve and gloom would divest any accidental and momentary disclosures of his inward trouble, showing itself in dark looks or sullen silence, of everything suspicious or unaccountable, which would have characterized such displays and eccentricities in another man.

His rapid and reckless ramble—a kind of physical vent for the paroxysm which had so agitated him throughout the greater part of the day—had soiled and disordered his dress, and thus had helped to give to his whole appearance a certain air of haggard wildness, which, in the privacy of his chamber, he hastened carefully and entirely to remove.

At supper, Marston was apparently in unusually good spirits. Sir Wynston and he chatted gaily and fluently upon many subjects, grave and gay. Among them the inexhaustible topic of popular superstition happened to turn up, and especially the subject of strange prophecies of the fates and fortunes of individuals, singularly fulfilled in the events of their after-life.

"By-the-bye, Dick, this is rather a nervous topic for me to discuss," said Sir Wynston.

"How so?" asked his host.

"Why, don't you remember?" urged the baronet.

"No, I don't recollect what you allude to," replied Marston, in all sincerity.

"Why, don't you remember Eton?" pursued Sir Wynston.

"Yes—to be sure," said Marston.

"*Well?*" continued his visitor.

"Well, I really don't recollect the prophecy," replied Marston.

"What! do you forget the gipsy who predicted that you were to murder *me*, Dick—eh?"

"Ah—ha, ha!" laughed Marston, with a start.

"Don't you remember it now?" urged his companion.

"Ah—why—yes—I believe I do," said Marston; "but another prophecy was running in my mind—a gipsy prediction, too. At Ascot, do you recollect the girl told me I was to be lord chancellor of England, and a duke besides."

"Well, Dick," rejoined Sir Wynston, merrily, "if both are to be fulfilled, or neither, I trust you may never sit upon the woolsack of England."

The party soon after broke up—Sir Wynston and his host, as usual, to pass some hours at picquet—and Mrs. Marston, as was her wont, to spend some time in her own boudoir, over notes and accounts, and the worrying details of housekeeping.

While thus engaged, she was disturbed by a respectful tap at her door, and an elderly servant, an Englishman, who had been for many years in the employment of Mr. Marston, presented himself.

"Well, Merton, do you want anything?" asked the lady.

"Yes, ma'am, please, I want to give warning—I wish to leave the service, ma'am;" replied he, respectfully, but doggedly.

"To leave us, Merton!" echoed

his mistress, both surprised and sorry, for the man had been long her servant, and had been much liked and trusted.

"Yes, ma'am," he repeated.

"And why do you wish to do so, Merton; has anything occurred to make the place unpleasant to you?" urged the lady.

"No, ma'am—no, indeed," said he, earnestly, "I have nothing to complain of—nothing, indeed, ma'am."

"Perhaps, you think you can do better, if you leave us?" suggested his mistress.

"No, indeed, ma'am, I have no such thought," he said, and seemed on the point of bursting into tears; "but—but, somehow—ma'am, there is something come over me, lately, and I can't help, but think, if I stay here, ma'am—some—some *misfortune* will happen us all—and that is the truth, ma'am."

"This is very foolish, Merton—a mere childish fancy," replied Mrs. Marston; "you like your place, and have no better prospect before you—and now, for a mere superstitious fancy, you propose giving it up, and leaving us. No, no, Merton, you had better think the matter over—and if you still, upon reflection, prefer going away, you can then speak to your master."

"Thank you, ma'am—God bless you," said the man, withdrawing.

Mrs. Marston rang the bell for her maid, and retired to her room.

"Has anything occurred lately," she asked, "to annoy Merton?"

"No, ma'am—I don't know of anything—but, he is very changed, indeed, of late," replied the maid.

"He has not been quarrelling?" inquired she.

"Ah, no, ma'am, he never quarrels—he is very quiet, and keeps to himself always—he thinks a wonderful deal of himself," replied the servant.

"But, you said that he is much changed—did you not?" continued the lady. For there was something strangely excited and unpleasant, at times, in the man's manner, which struck Mrs. Marston, and alarmed her curiosity. He had seemed like one charged with some horrible secret—intolerable, and yet, which he dared not reveal.

"What," proceeded Mrs. Marston, "is the nature of the change of which you speak?"

"Why, ma'am, he is like one frightened, and in sorrow," she replied; "he will sit silent, and now and then shaking his head, as if he wanted to get rid of something that is teazing him, for an hour together."

"Poor man!" said she.

"And, then, when we are at meals, he will, all on a sudden, get up, and leave the table—and Jem Carney, that sleeps in the next room to him, says, that, almost as often as he looks through the little window between the two rooms, no matter what hour in the night, he sees Mr. Merton on his knees by the bedside, praying or crying, he don't know which—but, any way, he is not happy—poor man!—and that is plain enough."

"It is very strange," said the lady, after a pause; "but, I do think, and hope, after all, it will prove to have been no more than a transient, nervous depression."

"Well, ma'am, I do hope it is not his conscience that is coming against him, now," said the maid.

"We have no reason to suspect anything of the kind," said Mrs. Marston, gravely; "quite the reverse—he has been always a particularly proper man."

"Oh, indeed," responded the attendant, "goodness forbid I should say or think anything against him; but I could not help telling you my mind, ma'am, meaning no harm."

"And, how long is it since you observed this sad change in poor Merton?" persisted the lady.

"Not, indeed, to say very long, ma'am," replied the girl; "somewhere about a week, or very little more—at least, as we remarked, ma'am."

Mrs. Marston pursued her inquiries no further that night. But, although she affected to treat the matter thus lightly, it had, somehow, taken a painful hold upon her imagination, and left in her mind those undefinable and ominous sensations, which, in certain mental dispositions, seem to foreshadow the approach of unknown misfortune.

For two or three days, everything went on smoothly, and pretty much as usual. At the end of this brief

interval, however, the attention of Mrs. Marston was recalled to the subject of her servant's mysterious anxiety to leave, and give up his situation. Merton again stood before her, and repeated the intimation he had already given.

"Really, Merton, this is very odd," said the lady. "You like your situation, and yet you persist in desiring to leave it. What am I to think?"

"Oh, ma'am," said he, "I am unhappy; I am tormented, ma'am. I can't tell you, ma'am—I can't, indeed, ma'am!"

"If anything weighs upon your mind, Merton, I would advise your consulting our good clergyman, Dr. Danvers," urged the lady.

The servant hung his head, and mused for a time gloomily; and then said, decisively—

"No, ma'am—no use."

"And pray, Merton, how long is it since you first entertained this desire?" asked Mrs. Marston.

"Since Sir Wynston Berkley came, ma'am," answered he.

"Has Sir Wynston annoyed you in any way?" continued she.

"Far from it, ma'am," he replied; "he is a very kind gentleman."

"Well, his *man*, then—is *he* a respectable, inoffensive person?" she inquired.

"I never met a more so," said the man, promptly, and raising his head.

"What I wish to know is, whether your desire to go is connected with Sir Wynston and his servant?" said Mrs. Marston.

The man hesitated, and shifted his position uneasily.

"You need not answer, Merton, if you don't wish it," she said, kindly.

"Why, ma'am, yes, it *has* something to say to them both," he replied, with some agitation.

"I really cannot understand this," said she.

Merton hesitated for some time, and appeared much troubled.

"It was something, ma'am—something that Sir Wynston's man said to me; and there it is out," he said at last, with an effort.

"Well, Merton," said she, "I won't press you further; but I must say, that as this communication, whatever it may be, has caused *you*, unquestionably, very great uneasiness, it seems to me but probable that it affects the safety or the interests of some person—I cannot say of whom; and, if so, there can be no doubt that it is your duty to acquaint the person or persons so involved in the disclosure, with its purport."

"Ah, ma'am, there is nothing in what I heard that could touch anybody but myself. It was nothing but what others heard, without remarking it, or thinking about it. I can't tell you any more, ma'am—but I am very unhappy, and uneasy in my mind."

As the man said this, he began to weep bitterly.

The idea that his mind was affected, now seriously occurred to Mrs. Marston, and she resolved to convey her suspicions to her husband, and to leave him to deal with the case as to him should seem good.

"Don't agitate yourself so, Merton; I shall speak to your master upon what you have said; and you may rely upon it, that no surmise to the prejudice of your character has entered my mind," said Mrs. Marston, very kindly.

"Ah, ma'am, you are too good," sobbed the poor man vehemently. "You don't know me, ma'am; I never knew myself till lately. I am a miserable man. I am frightened at myself, ma'am—frightened terribly. Christ knows, it would be well for me I was dead this minute.

"I am very sorry for your unhappiness, Merton," said Mrs. Marston; "and, especially, that I can do nothing to alleviate it; I can but speak, as I have said, to your master, and he will give you your discharge, and manage whatever else remains to be done."

"God bless you, ma'am," said the servant, still much agitated, and left her.

Mr. Marston usually passed the early part of the day in active exercise, and she, supposing that he was, in all probability, at that moment far from the house, went to "mademoiselle's" chamber, which was at the other end of the spacious house, to confer with her in the interval upon the strange application just urged by poor Merton.

Just as she reached the door of Mademoiselle de Barras's chamber, she heard voices within exerted in evident excitement. She stopped in amazement. They were those of her hus-

band and mademoiselle. Startled, confounded, and amazed, she pushed open the door, and entered. Her husband was sitting—one hand clutched upon the arm of the chair he occupied, and the other extended, and clenched, as it seemed, with the emphasis of rage, upon the desk which stood upon the table. His face was darkened with the stormiest passions, and his gaze was fixed upon the Frenchwoman, who was standing with a look half-guilty, half-imploring, at a little distance.

There was something, to Mrs. Marston, so utterly unexpected, and even so shocking, in this *tableau*, that she stood for some seconds pale and breathless, and gazing with a vacant stare of fear and horror from her husband to the French girl, and from her to her husband again. The three figures in this strange group remained fixed, silent, and aghast, for several seconds. Mrs. Marston endeavoured to speak; but, though her lips moved, no sound escaped her; and, from very weakness, she sank half-fainting into a chair.

Marston rose, throwing, as he did so, a guilty and a furious glance at the young Frenchwoman, and walked a step or two toward the door; he hesitated, however, and turned, just as mademoiselle, bursting into tears, threw her arms round Mrs. Marston's neck, and passionately exclaimed—

"Protect me, madame, I implore, from the insults and suspicions of your husband."

Marston stood a little behind his wife, and he and the governess exchanged a glance of keen significance, as the latter sank, sobbing, like an injured child into its mother's embrace, upon the poor lady's tortured bosom.

"Madame, madame—he says—Mr. Marston says, I have presumed to give you advice, and to meddle, and to interfere—that I am endeavouring to make you despise his authority. Madame, speak for me. Say, madame, have I ever done so—say, madame, am I the cause of bitterness and contumacy? Ah, mon dieu! c'est trop—it is too much, madame—I shall go—I must go, madame. Why, ah, why, did I stay for this?"

As she thus spoke, mademoiselle again burst into a paroxysm of weeping, and again the same significant glance was interchanged.

"Go—yes, you shall go," said Marston, striding toward the window. "I will have no whispering or conspiring in my house; I have heard of your confidences and consultations. Mrs. Marston, I meant to have done this quietly," he continued, addressing his wife; "I meant to have given Mademoiselle de Barras my opinion and her dismissal without your assistance; but it seems you wish to interpose. You are sworn friends, and never fail one another, of course, at a pinch. I take it for granted that I owe your presence at an interview which I am resolved shall be, as respects mademoiselle, a final one, to a message from that intriguing young lady—eh?"

"I have had no message, Richard," said Mrs. Marston; "I don't know—do tell me, for God's sake, what is all this about?" and as the poor lady thus spoke, her overwrought feelings found a vent in a violent flood of tears.

"Yes, madam, that is the question. I have asked him frequently what is all this anger, all these reproaches about—what have I done," interposed mademoiselle, with indignant vehemence, standing erect, and viewing Marston with a flashing eye and a flushed cheek. "Yes, I am called conspirator, meddler, *intriguante*—ah, madame, it is intolerable."

"But what have I done, Richard?" urged the poor lady, stunned and bewildered—"how have I offended you?"

"Yes, yes," continued the Frenchwoman, with angry volubility—"what has she done, that you call contumacy and disrespect? Yes, dear madame, *there* is the question; and if he cannot answer, is it not most cruel to call me conspirator, and spy, and *intriguante*, because I talk to my dear madame, who is my only friend in this place?"

"Mademoiselle de Barras, I need no declamation from you; and pardon me, Mrs. Marston, nor from you either," retorted he; "I have my information from one on whom I can rely—let that suffice. Of course you are both agreed in a story. I dare say you are ready to swear you never so much as canvassed my conduct, and my *coldness* and *estrangement*—eh? these are the words, are not they?"

"I have done you no wrong, sir—madame can tell you. *Je ne le jamais*

faite—I am no mischief-maker; no, I never was such a thing—was I, madame?" persisted the governess—"bear witness for me."

"I have told you my mind, Mademoiselle de Barras," interrupted Marston; "I will have no altercation, if you please. I think, Mrs. Marston, we have had enough of this; may I accompany you hence?"

So saying, he took the poor lady's passive hand, and led her from the room. Mademoiselle stood in the centre of the apartment, alone, erect, with heaving breast and burning cheek—beautiful, thoughtful, guilty—the very type of the fallen angelic. We must leave her there for a time, her heart all confusion, her mind darkness; various courses before her, and as yet without resolution to choose among them—a lost spirit, borne on the eddies of the storm—fearless and self-reliant, but with no star to guide her on her dark, malign, and forlorn way.

Mrs. Marston, in her own room, reviewed the agitating scene through which she had just been so unexpectedly carried. The tremendous suspicion which, at the first disclosure of the *tableau* we have described, smote the heart and brain of the poor lady with the stun of a thunderbolt, had been, indeed, subsequently disturbed, and afterwards contradicted; but the shock of her first impression remained still upon her mind and heart. She felt still through every nerve the vibrations of that maddening terror and despair which had overcome her senses for a moment. The surprise, the shock, the horror, outlived the obliterating influence of what followed. She was in this agitation when Mademoiselle de Barras entered her chamber, resolved with all her art to second and support the success of her prompt measures in the recent critical emergency. She had come, she said, to bid her dear madame farewell, for she was resolved to go. Her own room had been invaded, that insult and reproach might be heaped upon her—how utterly unmerited, Mrs. Marston knew. She had been called by every foul name which applied to the spy and the maligner; she could not bear it. Some one had evidently been endeavouring to procure her removal, and had but too effectually succeeded. Mademoiselle was determined to go early the next morning; nothing should prevent or retard her departure; her resolution was taken. In this strain did mademoiselle run on, but in a subdued and melancholy tone, and weeping profusely.

The wild and ghastly suspicions which had for a moment flashed terribly upon the mind of Mrs. Marston, had faded away under the influences of reason and reflection, although, indeed, much painful excitement still remained, before Mademoiselle de Barras had visited her room. Marston's temper she knew but too well; it was violent, bitter, and impetuous; and though he cared little, if at all, for her, she had ever perceived that he was angrily jealous of the slightest intimacy or confidence by which any other than himself might establish an influence over her mind. That he had learned the subject of some of her most interesting conversations with mademoiselle, she could not doubt; for he had violently upbraided that young lady in her presence with having discussed it, and here now was mademoiselle herself taking refuge with her from galling affront and unjust reproach, incensed, wounded, and weeping. The whole thing was consistent; all the circumstances bore plainly in the same direction; the evidence was conclusive; and Mrs. Marston's thoughts and feelings respecting her fair young confidante, quickly found their old level, and flowed on tranquilly and sadly in their accustomed channel.

While Mademoiselle de Barras was thus, with the persevering industry of the spider, repairing the meshes which a chance breath had shattered, she would, perhaps, have been in her turn shocked and startled, could she have glanced into Marston's mind, and seen, in what was passing there, the real extent of her danger.

Marston was walking, as usual, alone, and in the most solitary region of his lonely park. One hand grasped his walking-stick, not to lean upon it, but as if it were the handle of a battle-axe; the other was buried in his bosom; his dark face looked upon the ground, and he strode onward with a slow but energetic step, which had the air of deep resolution. He found him-

self at last in a little churchyard, lying far among the wild forest of his demesne, and in the midst of which, covered with ivy and tufted plants, now ruddy with autumnal tints, stood the ruined walls of a little chapel. In the dilapidated vault close by, lay buried many of his ancestors, and under the little wavy hillocks of fern and nettles, slept many an humble villager. He sat down upon a worn tombstone in this lowly ruin, and with his eyes fixed upon the ground, he surrendered his spirit to the stormy and evil thoughts which he had invited. Long and motionless he sat there, while his foul fancies and schemes began to assume shape and order. The wind rushing through the ivy roused him for a moment, and as he raised his gloomy eye, it alighted accidentally upon a skull, which some wanton hand had fixed in a crevice of the wall; he averted his glance quickly, but almost as quickly refixed his gaze upon the impassive symbol of death, with an expression lowering and contemptuous, and with an angry gesture struck it down among the weeds with his stick. He left the place, and wandered on through the woods.

"Men can't control the thoughts that flit across their minds," he muttered, as he went along, "any more than they can direct the shadows of the clouds that sail above them. They come and pass, and leave no stain behind. What, then, of omens, and that wretched effigy of death? Stuff—psha! *Murder*, indeed! I'm incapable of murder. I have drawn my sword upon a man in fair duel; but *murder!* Out upon the thought—out, out upon it."

He stamped upon the ground with a pang at once of fury and horror. He walked on a little, stopped again, and folding his arms, leaned against an ancient tree.

"Mademoiselle de Barras, vous etes une traitresse, and you shall go. Yes, go you shall; you have deceived me, and we must part."

He said this with melancholy bitterness; and, after a pause, continued—

"I will have no other revenge. No; though, I dare say, she will care but little for this—very little, if at all."

"And then, as to the other person," he resumed, after a pause. "It is not the first time he has acted like a trickster. He has crossed me before, and I will choose an opportunity to tell him my mind. I won't mince matters with him either, and will not spare him one insulting syllable that he deserves. He wears a sword, and so do I; if he pleases, he may draw it; he shall have the opportunity; but, at all events, I will make it impossible for him to prolong his disgraceful visit at my house."

On reaching home and his own study, the servant, Merton, presented himself, and his master, too deeply excited to hear him then, appointed the next day for the purpose. There was no contending against Marston's peremptory will, and the man reluctantly withdrew. Here was apparently a matter of no imaginable moment—whether this menial should be discharged on that day, or on the morrow; and yet mighty things were involved in the alternative.

There was a deeper gloom than usual over the house. The servants seemed to know that something had gone wrong, and looked grave and mysterious. Marston was more than ever dark and moody. Mrs. Marston's dimmed and swollen eyes showed that she had been weeping. Mademoiselle absented herself from supper, on the plea of a bad headache. Rhoda saw that something, she knew not what, had occurred to agitate her elders, and was depressed and anxious. The old clergyman whom we have already mentioned, had called, and stayed to supper. Dr. Danvers was a man of considerable learning, strong sense, and remarkable simplicity of character. His thoughtful blue eye, and well-marked countenance, were full of gentleness and benevolence, and elevated by a certain natural dignity, of which purity and goodness, without one debasing shade of self-esteem and arrogance, were the animating spirit. Mrs. Marston loved and respected this good minister of God, and many a time had sought and found, in his gentle and earnest counsels, and in the overflowing tenderness of his sympathy, much comfort and support in the progress of her sore and protracted earthly trial. Most especially at one critical period in her history had he endeared himself to her, by interposing, and successfully, to prevent a formal sepa-

ration, which (as ending for ever the one hope that cheered her on, even in the front of despair) she would probably not long have survived.

With Mr. Marston, however, he was far from being a favourite. There was that in his lofty and simple purity which abashed and silently reproached the sensual, bitter, disappointed man of the world. The angry pride of the scornful man felt its own meanness in the grand presence of a simple and humble Christian minister. And the very fact that all his habits had led him to hold such a character in contempt, made him but the more unreasonably resent the involuntary homage which its exhibition in Dr. Danvers' person invariably extorted from him. He felt in this good man's presence under a kind of imitating restraint—not, indeed, under any necessity whatever of modifying his ordinary conduct or language—but still he felt that he was in the presence of one with whom he had and could have no sympathy whatever, and yet one whom he could not help both admiring and respecting; and in these conflicting feelings were involved certain gloomy and humbling inferences about himself, which he hated, and almost feared to contemplate.

It was well, however, for the indulgence of Sir Wynston's conversational propensities, that Dr. Danvers had happened to drop in, for Marston was doggedly silent and sullen, and Mrs. Marston was herself scarcely more disposed than he to maintain her part in a conversation, so that, had it not been for the opportune arrival of the good clergyman, the supper must have been commenced with a very awkward and unsocial taciturnity.

Marston thought, and perhaps not erroneously, that Sir Wynston suspected something of the real state of affairs, and he was therefore incensed to perceive, as he thought, in his manner, very evident indications of his being in unusually good spirits. Thus disposed, the party sat down to supper.

"One of our number is missing," said Sir Wynston, affecting a slight surprise, which, perhaps, he did not feel.

"Mademoiselle de Barras—I trust she is well?" said Doctor Danvers, looking towards Marston.

"I suppose she is—I don't know," said Marston, drily, and with some embarrassment.

"Why, how should *he* know," said the baronet, gaily, but with something almost imperceptibly sarcastic in his tone. "Our friend, Marston, is privileged to be as ungallant as he pleases, except where he has the happy privilege to owe allegiance; but I, a gay young bachelor of fifty, am naturally curious. I really do trust that our charming French friend is not unwell."

He addressed his inquiry to Mrs. Marston, who, with some slight confusion, replied—

"No—nothing, at least, serious; merely a slight headache. I am sure she will be well enough to come down to breakfast."

"She is indeed a very charming and interesting young person," said Doctor Danvers. "There is a certain simplicity and good-nature about her, which argue a good and kind heart, and an open nature."

"Very true, indeed, doctor," observed Berkley, with the same faint, but, to Marston, exquisitely provoking approximation to sarcasm. "There is, as you say, a very charming simplicity. Don't you think so, Marston?"

Marston looked at him for a moment, but continued silent.

"Poor mademoiselle!—she is indeed a most affectionate creature," said Mrs. Marston, who felt called upon to say something.

"Come, Marston, will you contribute nothing to the general approbation?" said Sir Wynston, who was gifted by nature with an amiable talent for teasing, which he was fond of exercising in a quiet way. "We have all, but you, said something handsome of our absent young friend."

"I never praise anybody, Wynston—not even *you*," said Marston, with an obvious sneer.

"Well, well, I must comfort myself with the belief that your silence covers a great deal of good-will, and, perhaps, a little admiration, too," answered his cousin, significantly.

"Comfort yourself in any *honest* way you will, my dear Sir Wynston," retorted Marston, with a degree of asperity, which, to all but the baronet himself, was unaccountable. "You may be right—you may be wrong;

on a subject so unimportant, it matters very little which; you are at perfect liberty to practise delusions, if you will, upon *yourself*."

"By-the-bye, Mr. Marston, is not your son about to come to this country?" asked Doctor Danvers, who perceived that the altercation was becoming, on Marston's part, somewhat testy, if not positively rude.

"Yes; I expect him in a few days," replied he, with a sudden gloom.

"You have not seen him, Sir Wynston?" asked the clergyman.

"I have that pleasure yet to come," said the baronet.

"A pleasure it *is*, I do assure you," said Doctor Danvers, heartily. "He is a handsome lad, with the heart of a hero; a fine, frank, generous lad, and as merry as a lark."

"Yes, yes," interrupted Marston; he is well enough, and has done pretty well at Cambridge. Doctor Danvers, take some wine."

It was strange, but yet mournfully true, that the praises which the good Doctor Danvers thus bestowed upon his son, were bitter to the soul of the unhappy Marston; they jarred upon his ear, and stung his heart, for his conscience converted them into so many latent insults and humiliations to himself.

"Your wine is very good, Marston. I think your clarets here are many degrees better than we can get in England," said Sir Wynston, sipping a glass of his favourite wine. "You Irish gentlemen are sad, selfish dogs; and, with all your grumbling, manage to collect the best of whatever is worth having about you."

"We sometimes succeed in collecting a pleasant party," retorted Marston, with ironical courtesy, "though we do not always command the means of entertaining them quite as we would wish."

It was the habit of Doctor Danvers, without respect of persons or places, to propose, before taking his departure from whatever domestic party he chanced to be thrown among for the evening, to read some verses from that holy book, on which his own hopes and peace were founded, and to offer up a prayer for all to the throne of grace. Marston, although he usually absented himself from such exercises, did not otherwise discourage them; but upon the present occasion, starting from a gloomy reverie, he himself was first to remind the clergyman of his customary observance. Evil thoughts loomed upon the mind of Marston, like measureless black mists upon a cold, smooth sea. They rested, grew, and darkened there; and no heaven-sent breath came silently to steal them away. Under this dread shadow, his mind lay waiting, like the DEEP, before the Spirit of God moved upon its waters—passive and awful. Why, for the first time now did religion interest him? The unseen, intangible, was even now at work within him. A dreadful power shook his very heart and soul. There was some strange, ghastly wrestling going on in his own immortal spirit—a struggle which made him faint—which he had no power to determine. He looked upon the holy influence of the good man's prayer—a prayer in which he could not join—with a dull, superstitious hope that the words, inviting better influence, though uttered by another, and with other objects, would like a spell, chase away the foul fiend that was busy with his thoughts. Marston sate, looking into the fire, with a countenance of stern gloom, upon which the wayward lights of the flickering hearth sported fitfully; while, at a distant table, Doctor Danvers sate down, and taking his well-worn Bible from his pocket, turned over its leaves, and began, in gentle but impressive tones, to read.

Sir Wynston was much too well-bred, to evince the slightest disposition to aught but the most proper and profound attention. The faintest imaginative gleam of ridicule might, perhaps, have been discerned in his features, as he leaned back in his chair, and, closing his eyes, composed himself to at least an attitude of attention. No man could submit with more patience to an inevitable bore.

In these things, then, thou hast no concern—the judgment troubles thee not—thou hast no fear of *death*, Sir Wynston Berkley; yet there is a heart beating near thee, the mysteries of which, could they glide out, and stand before thy face, would, perchance, appall thee—cold, easy man of the world. Ay, couldst thou but see with those cunning eyes of thine, but twelve

brief hours into futurity, each syllable that falls from that good man's lips unheeded, would peal through thy heart and brain like maddening thunder. Hearken, hearken, Sir Wynston Berkley, perchance these are the farewell words of thy better angel—the last pleadings of despised mercy.

* * * * *

The party broke up. Dr. Danvers took his leave, and rode homeward, down the broad avenue, between the gigantic ranks of elm that closed it in. The full moon was rising above the distant hills—the mists lay like sleeping lakes in the laps of the hollows—and the broad demesne looked tranquil and sad under this chastened and silvery glory. The good old clergyman thought, as he pursued his way, that here at least, in a spot so beautiful and sequestered, the stormy passions and fell contentions of the outer world could scarcely penetrate. Yet, in that calm, secluded spot, and under the cold, pure light which fell so holily, what a hell was weltering and glowing! what a spectacle was that moon to go down upon!

As Sir Wynston was leaving the parlour for his own room, Marston accompanied him to the hall, and said,

"I shan't play to-night, Sir Wynston."

"Ah, ha!—very particularly engaged?" suggested the baronet, with a faint, mocking smile; "well, my dear fellow, we must endeavour to make up for it to-morrow—eh?"

"I don't know *that*," said Marston, "and —— In a word, there is no use, sir, in our masquerading with one another—each knows the other—each *understands* the other—I wish to have a word or two with you in your room to-night, where we shan't be interrupted."

Marston spoke in a fierce and grating whisper, and his countenance, more even than his accents, betrayed the intensity of his bridled fury. Sir Wynston, however, smiled upon his cousin, as if his voice had been melody, and his looks all sunshine.

"Very good, Marston, just as you please," he said, "only don't be later than one, as I shall be getting into bed about that hour."

"Perhaps, upon second thoughts, it is as well to defer what I have to say," said Marston, musingly. "Tomorrow will do as well; so, *perhaps*, Sir Wynston, I may not trouble you to-night."

"Just as suits you best, my dear Marston," replied the baronet, with a tranquil smile; "only don't come after the hour I have stipulated."

So saying, the baronet mounted the stairs, and made his way to his chamber. He was in excellent spirits, and in high good-humour with himself; the object of his visit to Dunoran had been, as he now flattered himself, attained. He had conducted an affair requiring the profoundest mystery in its prosecution, and the wisest tactique in its management, almost to a triumphant issue—he had perfectly masked his design, and completely outwitted Marston; and to a person who piqued himself upon his clever diplomacy, and vaunted that he had never yet sustained a defeat in any object which he had seriously proposed to himself, such a combination of successes was for the moment quite intoxicating.

Sir Wynston not only enjoyed his own superiority with all the vanity of a selfish nature, but he no less enjoyed with a keen and malicious relish the intense mortification which, he was well assured, Marston must experience, and all the more acutely, because of the utter impossibility, circumstanced as he was, of his taking any steps to manifest his vexation, without compromising himself in a most unpleasant way.

Animated by those amiable feelings, Sir Wynston Berkley sate down, and wrote the following short letter, addressed to Mrs. Gray, Wynston Hall:

"Mrs. Gray,—On receipt of this, have the sitting-rooms, and several bedrooms put in order, and thoroughly aired. Prepare for my use the suite of three rooms over the library and drawingroom; and have the two great wardrobes, and the cabinet in the *state* bedroom, removed into the large dressing-room which opens upon the bedroom I have named. Make everything as comfortable as possible. If anything is wanted in the way of furniture, drapery, ornament, &c., you need only write to John Skelton, Esq., Spring-garden, London, stating what is required, and he will order and send them down. You must be expeditious, as I shall probably go down to

Wynston, with two or three friends, at the beginning of next month.

"WYNSTON BERKLEY.

"P.S.—I have written to direct Arkins and two or three of the other servants to go down at once. Set them all to work immediately."

He then applied himself to another letter of considerably greater length, and from which, therefore, we shall only offer a few extracts. It was addressed to John Skelton, Esq., and began as follows:—

"MY DEAR SKELTON,—You are, doubtless, surprised at my long silence, but I have had nothing very particular to say—my visit to this dull and uncomfortable place was (as you rightly surmise) not without its object—a little bit of wicked romance; the pretty demoiselle of Rouen, whom I mentioned to you more than once—la belle de Barras—was, in truth, the attraction that drew me hither; and, I *think* (for, as yet, she affects hesitation) I shall have no further trouble with her. She is a fine creature, and you will admit, when you have seen her, well worth taking some trouble about. She is, however, a very knowing little minx, and evidently suspects me of being a sad, fickle dog—and, as I surmise, has some plans, moreover, respecting my morose cousin, Marston—a kind of wicked Penruddock—who has carried all his London tastes into his Irish retreat, a paradise of bogs and bushes. There is, I am very confident, a *liason* in that quarter. The young lady is evidently a good deal afraid of him, and insists upon such precautions in our interviews, that they have been very few, and far between, indeed. To-day, there has been a *fracas* of some kind. I have no doubt that Marston, poor devil, is jealous. His situation is really pitiably comic—with an intriguing mistress, a saintly wife, and a devil of a jealous temper of his own. I shall meet Mary on reaching town. Has Clavering (shabby dog!) paid his I. O. U. yet? Tell the little opera woman she had better be quiet. She ought to know me by this time—I shall do what is right—but won't submit to be bullied. If she is troublesome, snap your fingers at her, on my behalf, and leave her to her remedy. I have written to Gray, to get things at Wynston in order. She will draw upon you for what money she requires. Send down two or three of the servants, if they have not already gone. The place is very dusty and dingy, and needs a great deal of brushing and scouring. I shall see you in town very soon—by the way, their claret here is particularly good—so I ordered a prodigious supply from a Dublin house; it is consigned to you, and goes by the 'Lizard;' pay the freightage, and get Edwards to pack it; ten dozen or so may as well go down to Wynston, and send other wines in proportion. I leave details to you." . . . . . .

Some further directions upon other subjects followed; and having subscribed the dispatch, and addressed it to the gentlemanlike scoundrel who filled the onerous office of factotum to this profligate and exacting man of the world, Sir Wynston Berkley rang his bell, and gave the two letters into the hand of his man, with special directions to carry them *himself* in person, to the post-office in the neighbouring village, early next morning. These little matters completed, Sir Wynston stirred his fire, leaned back in his easy chair, and smiled blandly over the sunny prospect of his imaginary triumphs.

It here becomes necessary to describe, in a few words, some of the local relations of Sir Wynston's apartments. The bedchamber which he occupied opened from the long passage of which we have already spoken—and there were two other smaller apartments opening from it in train. In the further of these, which was entered from a lobby, communicating by a back stairs with the kitchen and servants' apartments, lay Sir Wynston's valet—and the intermediate chamber was fitted up as a dressing-room for the baronet himself. These circumstances it is necessary to mention, that what follows may be clearly intelligible.

While the baronet was penning these records of vicious schemes—dire waste of wealth and time—irrevocable time!—Marston paced his study in a very different frame of mind. There was a gloom and disorder in the room accordant with those of his own mind. Shelves of ancient tomes, darkened by time, and upon which the dust of years lay sleeping—dark oaken cabinets, filled with piles of deeds and

papers, among which the nimble spiders were crawling—and, from the dusky walls, several stark, pale ancestors, looking down fearfully from their tarnished frames. An hour, and another hour passed—and still Marston paced this melancholy chamber, a prey to his own fell passions and dark thoughts. He was not a superstitious man, but, in the visions which haunted him, perhaps, was something which made him unusually excitable—for, he experienced a chill of absolute horror, as, standing at the farther end of the room, with his face turned towards the entrance, he beheld the door noiselessly and slowly pushed open, by a pale, thin hand, and a figure, dressed in a loose white robe, glide softly in. He stood for some seconds gazing upon this apparition, as it moved hesitatingly towards him from the dusky extremity of the large apartment, before he perceived that the form was that of Mrs. Marston.

"Hey, ha!—Mrs. Marston—what on earth has called you hither?" he asked, sternly. "You ought to have been at rest an hour ago—get to your chamber, and leave me—I have business to attend to."

"Now, dear Richard, you must forgive me," she said, drawing near, and looking up into his haggard face with a sweet and touching look of timidity and love, "I could not rest until I saw you again—your looks have been all this night so unlike yourself—so strange and terrible—that I am afraid some great misfortune threatens you, which you fear to tell me of."

"My looks! why, curse it, must I give an account of my looks?" replied Marston, at once disconcerted and wrathful. "Misfortune! what misfortune can befall us more? No, there is nothing—nothing, I say, but your own foolish fancy—go to your room—go to sleep—my looks, indeed; psha!"

"I came to tell you, Richard, dear, that I will do, in all respects, just as you desire. If you continue to wish it, I will part with poor mademoiselle; though, indeed, Richard, I shall miss her more than you can imagine; and all your suspicions have wronged her deeply," said Mrs. Marston.

Her husband darted a sudden flashing glance of suspicious scrutiny upon her face; but its expression was frank, earnest, and noble. He was disarmed—he hung his head gloomily upon his breast, and was silent for a time. She came nearer, and laid her hand upon his arm. He looked darkly into her upturned eyes, and a feeling which had not touched his heart for many a day—an emotion of pity—transient, indeed, but vivid—revisited him. He took her hand in his, and said, in gentler terms than she had heard him use for a long time—

"No, indeed, Gertrude, you have deceived yourself; no misfortune has happened, and if I *am* gloomy, the source of all my troubles is *within*. Leave me, Gertrude, for the present. As to the other matter—the departure of Mademoiselle de Barras—we can talk of that to-morrow—*now* I cannot; so let us part. Go to your room—good night."

She was withdrawing, and he added, in a subdued tone—

"Gertrude, I am very glad you came—*very* glad. Pray for me to-night."

He had followed her a few steps toward the door, and now stopped short—turned about, and walked dejectedly back again.

"I *am* right glad she came," he muttered, as soon as he was once more alone. "Wynston is provoking and fiery, too. Were I in my present mood, to seek a *tête-à-tête* with him, who knows what might come of it? Blood; my own heart whispers—*blood!* I'll not trust myself."

He strode to the study door, locked it, and taking out the key, shut it in the drawer of one of the cabinets.

"Now it will need more than accident or impulse to lead me to him. I cannot go, at least, without reflection—without premeditation. Avaunt, fiend! I have baffled you."

He stood in the centre of the room, crouching and scowling as he said this, and looked round with a glance half-defiant, half-fearful, as if he expected to see some dreadful form in the dusky recesses of the desolate chamber. He sate himself by the smouldering fire, in sombre and agitated ruminations. He was restless—he rose again, unbuckled his sword, which he had not loosed since evening, and threw it hastily into a corner. He looked at his watch, it was half-past twelve—he glanced at the door, and thence at the cabinet in which he had placed the key; then he turned hastily,

and sate down again. He leaned his elbows on his knees, and his chin upon his clenched hand; still he was restless and excited. Once more he arose, and paced up and down. He consulted his watch again; it was now but a quarter to one.

* * * * *

Sir Wynston's man having received the letters, and his master's permission to retire to rest, got into his bed, and was soon beginning to dose. We have already mentioned that his and Sir Wynston's apartments were separated by a small dressing-room, so that any ordinary noise or conversation could be heard but imperfectly from one to the other. The servant, however, was startled by a sound of something falling on the floor of his master's apartment, and broken to pieces by the violence of the shock. He sate up in his bed, listened, and heard some sentences spoken vehemently, and gabbled very fast. He thought he distinguished the words "wretch" and "God;" and there was something so strange in the tone in which they were spoken, that the man got up and stole noiselessly through the dressing-room, and listened at the door.

He heard him, as he thought, walking in his slippers through the room, and making his customary arrangements previously to getting into bed. He knew that his master had a habit of speaking when alone, and concluded that the accidental breakage of some glass or chimney-ornament had elicited the volley of words he had heard. Well knowing that, except at the usual hours, or in obedience to Sir Wynston's bell, nothing more displeased his master than his presuming to enter his sleeping-apartment while he was there, the servant quietly retreated, and, perfectly satisfied that all was right, composed himself to slumber, and was soon beginning to dose again.

The fretting adventures of the night, however, were not yet over. Waking, as men sometimes do, without any ascertainable cause—without a start or an uneasy sensation—without even a disturbance of the attitude of repose, he opened his eyes, and beheld Merton, the servant of whom we have spoken, standing at a little distance from his bed. The moonlight fell in a clear flood upon this figure: the man was ghastly pale; there was a blotch of blood on his face; his hands were clasped upon something which they nearly concealed; and his eyes, fixed on the servant who had just awakened, shone in the cold light, with a wild and death-like glitter. This spectre drew close to the side of the bed, and stood for a few moments there with a look of agony and menace, which startled the newly-awakened man, who rose up aright, and said—

"Mr. Merton, Mr. Merton—in God's name, what is the matter?"

Merton recoiled at the sound of the voice; and, as he did so, dropped something on the floor, which rolled away to a distance; and he stood gazing silently and horribly upon his interrogator.

"Mr. Merton, I say, what *is* it?" urged the man. "Are you hurt?—your face is bloody."

Merton raised his hand to his face mechanically, and Sir Wynston's man observed that it, too, was covered with blood.

"Why, man," he said, vehemently, and actually freezing with horror, "you are *all* bloody—hands and face; all over blood."

"My hand is cut to the bone," said Merton, in a harsh whisper; and speaking to himself, rather than addressing the servant—"I wish it was my neck—I wish to God I bled to death."

"You have hurt your hand, Mr. Merton," repeated the man, scarce knowing what he said.

"Ay," whispered Merton, wildly drawing toward the bedside again; "who told you I hurt my hand? It is cut to the bone, sure enough."

He stooped for a moment over the bed, and then cowered down toward the floor, to search for what he had dropped.

"Why, Mr. Merton, what brings you here at this hour?" urged the man, after a pause of a few seconds. "It is drawing toward morning."

"Ay, ay," said Merton, doubtfully, and starting upright again, while he concealed in his bosom what he had been in search of. "Near morning, is it? Night and morning, it is all one to me. I believe I am going mad, by ——"

"But, what do you want?—what did you come here for at this hour?" persisted the man.

"*What!* ay, *that* is it—why, his boots and spurs, to be sure. I forgot

them. His—his—Sir Wynston's boots and spurs—I forgot to take them, I say," said Merton, looking toward the dressing-room, as if about to enter it.

"Don't mind them to-night, I say; don't go in there," said the man, peremptorily, and getting out upon the floor. "I say, Mr. Merton, this is no hour to be going about, searching in the dark for boots and spurs. You'll waken the master. I can't have it, I say; go down, and let it be for to-night."

Thus speaking, in a resolute and somewhat angry under-key, the valet stood between Merton and the entrance of the dressing-room; and, signing with his hand toward the other door of the apartment, continued—

"Go down, I say, Mr. Merton—go down; you may as well quietly, for, I tell you plainly, you shall neither go a step further, nor stay here a moment longer."

The man drew his shoulders up, and made a sort of shivering moan, and clasping his hands together, shook them, as it seemed, in great agony. He then turned abruptly, and hurried from the room by the door leading to the kitchen.

"By my faith," said the servant, "I am glad he is gone. The poor chap is turning crazy, as sure as I am a living man. I'll not have him prowling about here any more, however—that I am resolved on."

In pursuance of this determination, by no means an imprudent one as it seemed, he fastened the door communicating with the lower apartments upon the inside. He had hardly done this, when he heard a step traversing the stable-yard, which lay under the window of his apartment. He looked out, and saw Merton walking hurriedly across, and into a stable at the farther end.

Feeling no very particular curiosity about his movements, the man hurried back to his bed. Merton's eccentric conduct of late had become so generally remarked and discussed among the servants, that Sir Wynston's man was by no means surprised at the oddity of the visit he had just had; nor, after the first few moments of suspense, before the appearance of blood had been accounted for, had he entertained any suspicions whatever connected with the man's unexpected presence in the room. Merton was in the habit of coming up every night to take down Sir Wynston's boots, whenever the baronet had ridden in the course of the day; and this attention had been civilly undertaken as a proof of good-will toward the valet, whose duty this somewhat soiling and ungentlemanlike process would otherwise have been. So far, the nature of the visit was explained; and the remembrance of the friendly feeling and good offices which had been mutually interchanged, as well as of the inoffensive habits for which Merton had earned a character for himself, speedily calmed the uneasiness, for a moment amounting to actual alarm, with which the servant had regarded his appearance.

We must now pass on to the morrow, and ask the reader's attention for a few moments to a different scene.

In contact with Dunoran, upon the northern side, and divided by a common boundary, lay a demesne, in many respects presenting a very striking contrast to its grander neighbour. It was a comparatively modern place. It could not boast the towering timber which enriched and overshadowed the vast and varied expanse of its aristocratic rival; but, if it was inferior in the advantages of antiquity, and, perhaps, also in some of those of nature, its superiority in other respects was striking and important. Dunoran was not more remarkable for its wild and neglected condition, than was Newton Park for the care and elegance with which it was kept. No one could observe the contrast, without, at the same time, divining its cause. The proprietor of the one was a man of wealth, fully commensurate with the extent and pretensions of the residence he had chosen—the owner of the other was a man of broken fortunes.

Under a green shade, which nearly met above them, a very young man, scarcely one-and-twenty, of a frank and sensible, rather than a strictly handsome countenance, was walking, side by side, with a light-haired, laughing, graceful girl, of some sixteen years. This girl, without being classically beautiful, had such an elegance and perfect symmetry of form, and such an unutterable prettiness of feature, that it would have been difficult to conceive a being more attractive.

These two *friends* (for they were, in truth, no more) were taking a morning ramble together; and the gay laugh of the girl, and the more sober tones of her companion, sounded pleasantly among the arches of the greenwood. The young man was George Mervyn, the only son of the present proprietor of the place; and the girl was his orphan niece, Emily Howard. The mutual feelings of the two cousins were, as we have said, those of mere friendship, untinctured by the faintest admixture of any more romantic ingredient; and, indeed, a close observer might easily have detected this in the perfectly disengaged and honestly familiar way in which each accosted the other. As they walked on, chatting, to the great gate, which was to be the boundary of their ramble, the clank of a horse's hoofs in quick motion upon the sequestered road which ran outside it, reached them; and hardly had they heard these sounds, when a young gentleman rode briskly by, directing his look into the demesne as he passed. He had no sooner seen them, than wheeling his horse about, he rode up to the iron gate, and dismounting, threw it open, and let his horse in.

"Ha! Charles Marston, I protest!" said the young man, quickening his pace to meet his friend. "Marston, my dear fellow," he called aloud, "how glad I am to see you."

Miss Howard, on the contrary, walked rather slower than before, and blushed deeply; but as the handsome young man, with an air in which delight, tenderness, and admiration, were undisguisedly mingled, saluted her after his long absence, through her smiles and blushes, there was in her pretty face a look of such blended gratification and modesty, as made her quite beautiful.

There was another entrance into Newton Park, opening also from the same road, about half a mile further on; and Charles Marston, but too intent on prolonging the happiness of this chance meeting, made his way to lie through this. Thus the young people walked on, talking of a hundred things as they proceeded, in the fulness and joy of their hearts.

Between the fathers of the two young men, who thus walked so affectionately together, there subsisted unhappily no friendly feelings. There had been several slight disagreements between them, touching their proprietary rights, and one of these had ripened into a formal and somewhat expensive litigation, respecting a certain right of fishing claimed by each. This legal encounter had terminated in the defeat of Marston. Mervyn, however, promptly wrote to his opponent, offering him the free use of the waters for which they had thus sharply contested, and received a curt and scarcely civil reply, declining the proposed courtesy. This exhibition of resentment on Marston's part, had been followed by some rather angry collisions, where chance or duty happened to throw them together. It is but justice to say that, upon all such occasions, Marston was the aggressor. But Mervyn was a somewhat testy old gentleman, and had a certain pride of his own, which was not to be trifled with. Thus, though near neighbours, the parents of the young friends were more than strangers to each other. On Mervyn's side, however, this estrangement was unalloyed with bitterness, and simply of that kind which the great moralist would have referred to "defensive pride." It did not include any member of Marston's family, and Charles, as often as he desired it, which was, in truth, as often as his visits could escape the special notice of his father, was a welcome guest at Newton Park.

These details, respecting the mutual relation in which the two families stood, it was necessary to state, for the purpose of making what follows perfectly clear. The young people had now reached the further gate, at which they were to part. Charles Marston, with a heart beating happily in the anticipation of many a pleasant meeting, bid them farewell for the present, and in a few minutes more was riding up the broad, straight avenue, towards the gloomy mansion which closed in the hazy and sombre perspective. As he moved onward, he passed a labourer, with whose face from his childhood he had been familiar.

"How do you do, Mick?" he cried.

"At your sarvice, sir," replied the man, uncovering, "and welcome home, sir."

There was something dark and anxious in the man's looks, which ill accorded with the welcome he spoke, and which suggested some undefined alarm.

"The master, and mistress, and Miss Rhoda—are all well?" he asked, eagerly.

"All well, sir, thank God," replied the man.

Young Marston spurred on, filled with vague apprehensions, and observing the man still leaning upon his spade, and watching his progress with the same gloomy and curious eye.

At the hall-door he met with one of the servants, booted and spurred.

"Well, Daly," he said, as he dismounted, "how are all at home?"

This man, like the former, met his smile with a troubled countenance, and stammered—

"All, sir—that is, the master, and mistress, and Miss Rhoda—quite well, sir; but ——"

"Well, well," said Charles, earnestly, "speak on—what is it?"

"Bad work, sir," replied the man, lowering his voice. "I am going off this minute for ——"

"For what?" urged the young gentleman.

"Why, sir, for the coroner," replied he.

"The coroner—the coroner! Why, good God, what has happened?" cried Charles, aghast with horror.

"Sir Wynston," commenced the man, and hesitated.

"Well?" pursued Charles, pale and breathless.

"Sir Wynston—he—it is *he*," said the man.

"He? Sir Wynston? Is he dead, or *who* is?—who is dead?" demanded the young man, fearfully.

"Sir Wynston, sir—it is he that is dead. There is bad work, sir—very bad, I'm afeard," replied the man.

Charles did not wait to inquire further, but with a feeling of mingled horror and curiosity, entered the house.

He hurried up the stairs, and entered his mother's sitting-room. She was there, perfectly alone, and so deadly pale, that she scarcely looked like a human being. In an instant they were locked in one another's arms.

"Mother—my dear mother, you are ill," said the young man anxiously.

"Oh, no, no, Charles, dear, but frightened—horrified;" and as she said this, the poor lady burst into tears.

"What *is* all this horrible affair?—something about Sir Wynston. He is dead, I know, but is it—is it suicide?" he asked.

"Oh, no, *not* suicide," said Mrs. Marston, greatly agitated.

"Good God!—then he is murdered," whispered the young man, growing very pale.

"Yes, Charles—horrible—dreadful I can scarcely believe it," replied she, shuddering while she wept.

"Where is my father," inquired the young man, after a pause.

"Why, why, Charles, darling—why do you ask for him?" she said, wildly, grasping him by the arm, as she looked into his face with a terrified expression.

"Why—why, *he* could tell me the particulars of this horrible tragedy," answered he, meeting her agonized look with one of alarm and surprise, "as far as they have been as yet collected. How is he, mother—is he well."

"Oh, yes, quite well, thank God," she answered, more collectedly—"quite well, but, of course, greatly, dreadfully shocked."

"I will go to him, mother—I will see him," said he, turning towards the door.

"He has been wretchedly depressed and excited for some days," said Mrs. Marston, dejectedly, "and this dreadful occurrence will, I fear, affect him most deplorably."

The young man kissed her tenderly and affectionately, and hurried down to the library, where his father usually sat when he desired to be alone, or was engaged in business. He opened the door softly. His father was standing at one of the windows, his face haggard as from a night's watching, unkempt and unshorn, and with his hands thrust into his pockets. At the sound of the revolving door, he started, and seeing his son, first recoiled a little, with a strange, doubtful expression, and then rallying, walked quickly towards him with a smile, which had in it something still more painful.

"Charles, I am glad to see you," he said, shaking him with an agitated pressure by both hands—"Charles, this is a great calamity, and what makes it still worse, is, that the murderer has escaped; it looks badly, you know."

He fixed his gaze for a few moments upon his son, turned abruptly, and walked a little way into the room—then, in a disconcerted manner, he added, hastily turning back—

"Not, that it signifies to *us*, of

course—but I would fain have justice satisfied."

"And who is the wretch—the murderer?" inquired Charles.

"Who? Why, every one knows!—that scoundrel, Merton," answered Marston, in an irritated tone—"Merton murdered him in his bed, and fled last night; he is gone—escaped—and I suspect Sir Wynston's man of being an accessory."

"Which was Sir Wynston's bedroom?" asked the young man.

"The room that old Lady ——— had—the room with the portrait of Grace Hamilton in it."

"I know—I know;" said the young man, much excited—"I should wish to see it."

"Stay," said Marston; "the door from the passage is bolted on the inside, and I have locked the other—here is the key, if you choose to go—but you must bring Hughes with you, and do not disturb anything—leave all as it is—the jury ought to see, and examine for themselves."

Charles took the key, and, accompanied by the awe-struck servant, he made his way by the back stairs to the door opening from the dressing-room, which, as we have said, intervened between the valet's chamber and Sir Wynston's. After a momentary hesitation, Charles turned the key in the door, and stood

"In the dark chamber of white death."

The shutters lay partly open, as the valet had left them some hours before, on making the astounding discovery, which the partially-admitted light revealed. The corpse lay in the silk-embroidered dressing-gown, and other habiliments, which Sir Wynston had worn, while taking his ease in his chamber, on the preceding night. The coverlet was partially dragged over it. The mouth was gaping, and filled with clotted blood; a wide gash was also visible in the neck, under the ear—and there was a thickening pool of blood at the bedside, and quantities of blood, doubtless from other wounds, had saturated the bedclothes under the body. There lay Sir Wynston, stiffened in the attitude in which the struggle of death had left him, with his stern, stony face, and dim, terrible gaze turned up.

Charles looked breathlessly for more than a minute upon this mute and unchanging spectacle, and then silently suffered the curtain to fall back again—and stepped, with the light tread of awe, again to the door. There he turned back, and pausing for a minute, said, in a whisper, to the attendant—

"And Merton did this?"

"Troth, I'm afeard he did, sir," answered the man, gloomily.

"And has made his escape?" continued Charles.

"Yes, sir; he stole away in the night-time," replied the servant, "after the murder was done" (and he glanced fearfully toward the bed)—"God knows where he's gone."

"The villain!" muttered Charles; "but what was his motive? why did he do all this—what does it mean?"

"I don't know exactly, sir, but he was very queer for a week and more before it," replied the man; "there was something bad over him for a long time."

"It is a terrible thing," said Charles, with a profound sigh—"a terrible and shocking occurrence."

He hesitated again at the door, but his feelings had sustained a terrible revulsion at sight of the corpse, and he was no longer disposed to prosecute his purposed examination of the chamber and its contents, with a view to conjecturing the probable circumstances of the murder.

"Observe, Hughes, that I have moved nothing in the chamber from the place it occupied when we entered," he said to the servant, as they withdrew.

He locked the door, and as he passed through the hall, on his return, he encountered his father, and, restoring the key, said—

"I could not stay there—I am almost sorry I have seen it—I am overpowered—what a determined, ferocious murder it was—the place is all in a pool of gore—he must have received many wounds."

"I can't say—the particulars will be elicited soon enough—those details are for the inquest—as for me, I hate such spectacles," said Marston, gloomily; "go, now, and see your sister; you will find her there."

He pointed to the small room where we have first seen her and her fair governess, and Charles obeyed the direction, and Marston proceeded himself to his wife's sitting-room.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LATTER DAYS OF THE HON. RICHARD MARSTON, OF DUNORAN.

PART II.

"When Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death."

CHARLES MARSTON and his father parted, after the brief interview recorded in our last number, in the hall of Dunoran, upon the gloomy morning succeeding the murder of Sir Wynston. The young man, dispirited and horrified by the awful spectacle he had just contemplated, hurried to the little study occupied by his sister. Marston himself ascended, as we have said, the great staircase leading to his wife's private sitting-room.

"Mrs. Marston," he said, entering, "this is a hateful occurrence, a dreadful thing to have taken place here; I don't mean to affect *grief* which I don't feel—but, the thing is very shocking, and particularly so, as having occurred under my roof—but that cannot now be helped. I have resolved to spare no exertions, and no influence, to bring the assassin to justice—and a coroner's jury will, within a few hours, sift the evidence which we have succeeded in collecting—but, my purpose in seeking you now is, to recur to the conversation we yesterday had, respecting a member of this establishment."

"Mademoiselle de Barras?" suggested the lady.

"Yes, Mademoiselle de Barras," echoed Marston; "I wish to say, that, having reconsidered the circumstances affecting her, I am absolutely resolved that she shall not continue to be an inmate of this house."

He paused—and Mrs. Marston said—

"Well, Richard, I am sorry, very sorry for it; but your decision shall never be disputed by me."

"Of course," said Marston, drily; "and, therefore, the sooner you acquaint her with it, and let her know that she must go, the better."

Having said this, he left her, and went to his own chamber, where he proceeded to make his toilet with elaborate propriety, in preparation for the scene which was about to take place under his roof.

Mrs. Marston, meanwhile, suffered from a horrible uncertainty. She never harboured, it is true, one doubt as to her husband's perfect innocence of the ghastly crime which filled their house with fear and gloom; but, at the same time that she thoroughly and indignantly scouted the possibility of his, under any circumstances, being accessory to such a crime, she experienced a nervous and agonizing anxiety lest any one else should possibly suspect him, however obliquely and faintly, of any participation whatever in the foul deed. This vague fear tortured her—it had taken possession of her mind; and it was the more acutely painful, because it was of a kind which precluded the possibility of her dispelling it, as morbid fears so often are dispelled, by taking counsel upon its suggestions with a friend.

The day wore on, and strange faces began to fill the great parlour. The coroner, accompanied by a physician, had arrived. Several of the gentry in the immediate vicinity had been summoned as jurors, and now began to arrive in succession. Marston, in a handsome and sober suit, received these visitors with a stately and melancholy courtesy, befitting the occasion. Mervyn and his son had both been summoned, and, of course, were in attendance. There being now a sufficient number to form a jury, they were sworn, and immediately proceeded to the chamber where the body of the murdered man was lying.

Marston accompanied them, and with a pale and stern countenance, and in a clear and subdued tone, called their attention successively to every particular detail which he conceived important to be noted. Having thus employed some minutes, the jury again returned to the parlour, and the examination of the witnesses commenced.

Marston, at his own request, was first sworn and examined. He deposed merely to the circumstance of his parting, on the night previous, with

Sir Wynston, and to the state in which he had seen the room and the body in the morning. He mentioned also the fact, that on hearing the alarm in the morning, he had hastened from his own chamber to Sir Wynston's, and found, on trying to enter, that the door opening upon the passage was secured on the inside. This circumstance shewed that the murderer must have made his egress at least through the valet's chamber, and by the back-stairs. Marston's evidence went no further.

The next witness sworn was Edward Smith, the servant of the late Sir Wynston Berkley. His evidence was a narrative of the occurrences we have already stated. He described the sounds which he had overheard from his master's room, the subsequent appearance of Merton, and the conversation which had passed between them. He then proceeded to mention, that it was his master's custom to have himself called at seven o'clock, at which hour he usually took some medicine, which it was the valet's duty to bring to him; after which he either settled again to rest, or rose in a short time, if unable to sleep. Having measured and prepared this dose in the dressing-room, the servant went on to say, he had knocked at his master's door, and receiving no answer, had entered the room, and partly unclosed the shutters. He perceived the blood on the carpet, and on opening the curtains, saw his master lying with his mouth and eyes open, perfectly dead, and weltering in gore. He had stretched out his hand, and seized that of the dead man, which was quite stiff and cold; then, losing heart, he had run to the door communicating with the passage, but found it locked, and turned to the other entrance, and ran down the back-stairs, crying "murder." Mr. Hughes, the butler, and James Carney, another servant, came immediately, and they all three went back into the room. The key was in the outer door, upon the inside, but they did not unlock it until they had viewed the body. There was a great pool of blood in the bed, and in it was lying a red-handled case-knife, which was produced, and identified by the witness. Just then they heard Mr. Marston calling for admission, and they opened the door with some difficulty, for the lock was rusty. Mr. Marston had then ordered them to leave the things as they were, and had used very stern language to the witness. They had then left the room, securing both doors.

This witness underwent a severe and searching examination, but his evidence was clear and consistent.

In conclusion, Marston produced a dagger, which was stained with blood, and asked the man whether he recognised it.

Smith at once stated this to have been the property of his late master, who, when travelling, carried it, together with his pistols, along with him. Since his arrival at Dunoran, it had lain upon the chimney-piece in his bedroom, where he believed it to have been upon the previous night.

James Carney, one of Marston's servants, was next sworn and examined. He had, he said, observed a strange and unaccountable agitation and depression in Merton's manner for some days past; he had also been several times disturbed at night by his talking aloud to himself, and walking to and fro in his room. Their bedrooms were separated by a thin partition, in which was a window, through which Carney had, on the night of the murder, observed a light in Merton's room, and, on looking in, had seen him dressing hastily. He also saw him twice take up, and again lay down, the red-hafted knife which had been found in the bed of the murdered man. He knew it by the handle being broken near the end. He had no suspicion of Merton having any mischievous intentions, and lay down again to rest. He afterwards heard him pass out of his room, and go slowly up the back-stairs leading to the upper story. Shortly after this he had fallen asleep, and did not hear or see him return. He then described, as Smith had already done, the scene which presented itself in the morning, on his accompanying him into Sir Wynston's bedchamber.

The next witness examined was a little boy, who described himself as "a poor scholar." His testimony was somewhat singular. He deposed that he had come to the house on the preceding evening, and had been given some supper, and was afterwards permitted to sleep among the hay in one of the lofts. He had, however, discovered what he considered a snugger berth.

This was an unused stable, in the further end of which lay a quantity of hay. Among this he had lain down, and gone to sleep. He was, however, awakened in the course of the night, by the entrance of a man, whom he saw with perfect distinctness in the moonlight, and his description of his dress and appearance tallied exactly with those of Merton. This man occupied himself for some time in washing his hands and face in a stable bucket, which happened to stand by the door; and, during the whole of this process, he continued to moan and mutter like one in woful perturbation. He said, distinctly, twice or thrice, "by ——, I am done for;" and every now and then he muttered, "and nothing for it, after all." When he had done washing his hands, he took something from his coat-pocket, and looked at it, shaking his head; at this time he was standing with his back turned toward the hay, so that he could not see what this object might be. The man, however, put it into his breast, and then began to search hurriedly, as it seemed, for some hiding-place for it. After looking at the pavement, and poking at the chinks of the wall, he suddenly went to the window, and forced up the stone which formed the sill; under this he threw the object which the boy had seen him examine with so much perplexity, and then he re-adjusted the stone, and removed the evidences of its having been recently stirred. The boy was a little frightened, but very curious at all that he saw; and when the man left the stable in which he lay, he got up, and following to the door, peeped after him. He saw him putting on an outside-coat and hat, near the yard gate; and then, with great caution, unbolt the wicket, constantly looking back towards the house; and so, let himself out. The boy was uneasy, and sat in the hay, wide awake, until morning. He then told the servants what he had seen, and one of the men having raised the stone, which *he* had not strength to lift, they found the dagger which Smith had identified as belonging to his master. This weapon was stained with blood; and some hair, which was found to correspond in colour with Sir Wynston's, was sticking in the crevice between the blade and the handle.

"It appears very strange that *one* man should have employed two distinct instruments of this kind," observed Mervyn, after a pause. A silence followed.

"Yes, strange; it *does* seem strange," said Marston, clearing his voice.

"Yet, it is clear," said another of the jury, "that the same hand *did* employ them—it is proved that the knife was in Merton's possession just as he left his chamber, and proved also that the dagger was secreted by him, after he quitted the house.

"Yes," said Marston, with a grizly sort of smile, and glancing sarcastically at Mervyn, while he addressed the last speaker—"I thank you for recalling my attention to the facts—it certainly is not a very pleasant suggestion, that there still remains within my household an undetected murderer."

Mervyn ruminated for a time, and said he should wish to put a few more questions to Smith and Carney. They were accordingly recalled, and examined in great detail, with a view to ascertain whether any indication of the presence of a second person having visited the chamber with Merton was discoverable. Nothing, however, appeared, except that the valet mentioned the noise and the exclamations which he had indistinctly heard.

"You did not mention that before, sir," said Marston, sharply.

"I did not think of it, sir," replied the man, "the gentlemen were asking me so many questions; but I told you, sir, about it in the morning."

"Oh, ah—yes, yes—I believe you did," said Marston; "but you then said that Sir Wynston often talked when he was alone—eh, sir?"

"Yes, sir, and so he used, which was the reason I did not go into the room when I heard it," replied the man.

"How long afterwards was it when you saw Merton in your own room?" asked Mervyn.

"I could not say, sir," answered Smith; "I was soon asleep, and can't say how long I slept before he came."

"Was it an hour?" pursued Mervyn.

"I can't say," said the man, doubtfully.

"Was it five hours?" asked Marston.

"No, sir; I am sure it was not five."

"Could you swear it was more than half-an-hour?" persisted Marston.

"No, I could not swear that," answered he.

"I am afraid, Mr. Mervyn, you have found a mare's nest," said Marston, contemptuously.

"I have done my duty, sir," retorted Mervyn, cynically; "which plainly requires that I shall leave no doubt which the evidence of the witnesses can clear up, unsifted and unsatisfied. I happened to think it of some moment to ascertain, if possible, whether more persons than one were engaged in this atrocious murder—you don't seem to think the question so important a one—different men, sir, take different views."

"Views, sir, in matters of this sort, especially where they tend to multiply suspicions, and to implicate others, ought to be supported by something more substantial than mere fancies," retorted Marston.

"I don't know what you call fancies," replied Mervyn, testily, "but, here are *two* deadly weapons, a knife and a dagger—each, it would seem, employed in doing this murder—if you see nothing odd in that, I can't enable you to do so."

"Well, sir," said Marston, grimly, "the *whole* thing is, as you term it, *odd*, and I can see no object in your picking out this particular singularity for long-winded criticism, except to cast scandal upon my household, by leaving a hideous and vague imputation floating among the members of it. Sir—sir—this is a foul way," he cried sternly, "to gratify a paltry spite."

"Mr. Marston," said Mervyn, rising and thrusting his hands into his pockets, while he confronted him to the full as sternly, "the country knows in which of our hearts the spite, if any there is between us, is harboured. I owe you no friendship—but, sir, I cherish no malice either; and against the worst enemy I have on earth I am incapable of perverting an opportunity like this, and inflicting pain, under the pretence of discharging a duty."

Marston was on the point of interrupting, but the coroner interposed, and besought them to confine their attention strictly to the solemn inquiry which they were summoned together to prosecute. Meanwhile George Mervyn and Charles Marston were deeply pained and embarrassed at this fiery renewal of mutual hostilities between their parents; at a moment, too, when each had cherished the hope that they would, at least upon this occasion, have met without the exhibition of angry feelings.

There remained still to be examined the surgeon who had accompanied the coroner, for the purpose of reporting upon the extent and nature of the injuries discoverable upon the person of the deceased. He accordingly deposed, that having examined the body, he found no less than five deep wounds, inflicted with some sharp instrument; two of them had actually penetrated the heart, and had, of course, caused instant death. Besides these, there were two contusions, one upon the back of the head, the other upon the forehead, with a slight abrasion of the eyebrow. There was a large lock of hair torn out by the roots at the front of the head, and the palm and fingers of the right hand were cut. This evidence having been taken, the jury once more repaired to the chamber where the body lay, and proceeded with much minuteness to examine the room, with a view to ascertain, if possible, more particularly, the exact circumstances of the murder.

The result of this elaborate scrutiny was as follows: The deceased, they conjectured, had fallen asleep in his easy chair, and, while he was unconscious, the murderer had stolen into the room, and, before attacking his victim, had secured the bedroom door upon the inside—this was argued from the non-discovery of blood upon the handle, or any other part of the door. It was supposed that he had then approached Sir Wynston, with the view either of robbing, or of murdering him while he slept, and that the deceased had awakened just after he had reached him—that a brief and desperate struggle had ensued, in which the assailant had struck his victim with his fist upon the forehead, and having stunned him, had hurriedly clutched him by the hair, and stabbed him with the dagger which lay close by upon the chimney-piece, forcing his head violently against the back of the chair. This part of the conjecture was supported by the circumstance of there

being discovered a lock of hair upon the ground, at the spot, and a good deal of blood. The carpet, too, was tossed, and a water-croft which had stood upon the table close by, was lying in fragments upon the floor. It was supposed that the murderer had then dragged the half-lifeless body to the bed, where, having substituted the knife, which he had probably brought to the room in the same pocket from which the boy afterwards saw him take the dagger, he dispatched him; and either hearing some alarm—perhaps the movement of the valet in the adjoining room, or from some other cause—he dropped the knife in the bed, and was not able to find it again. The wounds upon the hand of the dead man indicated his having caught and struggled to hold the blade of the weapon with which he was assailed. The impression of a bloody hand thrust under the bolster, where it was Sir Wynston's habit to place his purse and watch, when making his arrangements for the night, supplied the motive of this otherwise unaccountable atrocity.

After some brief consultation, the jury agreed upon a verdict of wilful murder against John Merton, a finding of which the coroner expressed his entire approbation.

As the two young friends, George Mervyn and Charles, passed through the hall, they saw Rhoda gliding into her little study. Mervyn hesitated, as if about to follow her; but sighed, and said, after a moment's pause—

"Charles, I think she is more beautiful than ever."

Charles looked gratified, and replied—

"She is greatly improved since I saw her last—she is certainly *very* pretty."

They walked on in silence, and after a few seconds, Mervyn said, with a sigh—

"You can't think how my father's unhappy disagreement with yours afflicts me. I could have died with vexation to-day."

"It is, indeed, a deplorable thing—such near neighbours, too," replied Charles.

It was quite plain in what direction the thoughts of the two young men were travelling.

* * * * *

Marston, as a justice of the peace, had informations, embodying the principal part of the evidence given before the coroner, sworn against Merton, and transmitted a copy of them to the castle. A reward for the apprehension of the culprit was forthwith offered in the *Gazette*, but for some months without effect.

Marston had, in the interval, written to several of Sir Wynston's many relations announcing the catastrophe, and requesting that steps might immediately be taken to have the body removed. Meanwhile, undertakers were busy in the chamber of death. The corpse was inclosed in lead, and that again in cedar, and a great oak shell, covered with crimson cloth and gold-headed nails, and with a gilt plate recording the age, title, &c. &c., was screwed down firmly over all.

Nearly three weeks elapsed before any reply to Marston's letters were received. A short epistle at last arrived from Lord ——, the late Sir Wynston's uncle, deeply regretting "the sad and inexplicable occurrence;" and adding, that the will which, on receipt of the "distressing intelligence," was immediately opened and read, contained no direction whatever respecting the sepulture of the deceased, which had therefore better be completed as modestly and expeditiously as possible, in the neighbourhood of Dunoran; and, in conclusion, he directed that the accounts of the undertakers, &c., employed upon the melancholy occasion, might be sent in to Mr. Skelton, who had kindly undertaken to leave London for Ireland without any delay, for the purpose of completing these last arrangements, and who would, in any matter of business connected with the deceased, represent him, Lord H——, as executor of the late baronet.

This letter was followed, in a day or two, by the arrival of Skelton—a well-dressed, languid, impertinent London tuft-hunter—a good deal faded—with a somewhat sallow and puffy face, charged with a pleasant combination at once of meanness, insolence, and sensuality—just such a person as Sir Wynston's parasite might have been expected to prove.

However well disposed to impress the natives of Dunoran with high notions of his extraordinary refinement and

importance, he very soon discovered, that, in Marston, he had stumbled upon a man of the world, and one thoroughly versed in the ways and characters of London life. After some ineffectual attempts, therefore, to overawe and astonish his host, Mr. Skelton became aware of the fruitlessness of the effort, and condescended to abate somewhat of his pretensions.

Marston could not avoid inviting this person to pass the night at Dunoran, an invitation which was accepted, of course; and next morning, after a late breakfast, Mr. Skelton observed, with a yawn—

"And now, about this body—poor Berkley!—what do you propose to do with him?"

"I have no proposition to make," said Marston, drily; "it is no affair of mine, except that the body may be removed without more delay. I have no suggestion to offer."

"H——'s notion was to have him buried as near the spot as may be," said Skelton.

Marston nodded.

"There is a kind of vault—is there not—in the demesne, a family burial place?" inquired his visitor.

"Yes, sir," replied Marston, curtly.

"Well?" drawled Skelton.

"Well, sir; what then?" responded Marston.

"Why, as the wish of the parties is to have him buried—poor fellow!—as quietly as possible, I think he might just as well be laid *there* as anywhere else."

"Had I desired it, Mr. Skelton, I should myself have made the offer," said Marston, abruptly.

"Then you don't wish it?" said Skelton.

"No, sir; certainly not—most peremptorily not," answered Marston, with more sharpness than, in his early days, he would have thought quite consistent with politeness.

"Perhaps," replied Skelton, for want of something better to say, and with a callous sort of levity—"perhaps you hold the idea—some people *do*—that murdered men can't rest in their graves until their murderers have expiated their guilt?"

Marston made no reply, but shot two or three livid glances from under his brow, at the speaker.

"Well, then, at all events," continued Skelton, indolently resuming his theme, "if you decline your assistance, may I, at least, hope for your advice. Knowing nothing of this country, I would ask you whither you would recommend me to have the body conveyed?"

"I don't care to advise in the matter," said Marston, "but if I were directing, I should have the remains buried in the city of Dublin. It is not more than twenty miles from this; and if at any future time his family should desire to remove the body to England, it could be effected more easily from thence. But you can decide."

"Egad! I believe you are right," said Skelton, glad to be relieved of the trouble of thinking about the matter; "and I shall take your advice."

In accordance with this declaration, the body was, within four-and-twenty hours, removed to Dublin, and buried there in St. Peter's churchyard, Mr. Skelton attending on behalf of Sir Wynston's numerous and afflicted friends and relatives.

There are certain heartaches for which time brings no healing; nay, which grow but the sorer and fiercer as days and years roll on. Of this kind, perhaps, was the stern and bitter feeling which now darkened the face of Marston, with an almost perpetual gloom. His habits became even more unsocial than before. The society of his son he no longer seemed to enjoy. Long and solitary rambles in his wild and extensive demesne consumed the listless hours of his waking existence; and when the weather prevented this, he shut himself up, upon pretence of business, in his study.

He had not, since the occasion we have already mentioned, referred to the intended departure of Mademoiselle de Barras. Truth to say, his feelings with respect to that young lady were of a conflicting and mysterious kind; and as often as his dark thoughts wandered to her (which indeed was frequently enough), his muttered exclamations seemed to imply some painful and horrible suspicions respecting her.

"Yes," he would mutter, "I thought I heard your light foot upon the lobby, on that *accursed* night. *Fancy!* well it *may* have been, but assuredly a

strange fancy. I cannot comprehend that woman. She baffles my scrutiny. I have looked into her face with an eye she might well understand, were it indeed as I sometimes suspect, and she has been calm and unmoved. I have watched and studied her, still doubt—doubt—hideous doubt—is she what she seems, or—a TIGRESS?"

Mrs. Marston, on the other hand, procrastinated from day to day the painful task of announcing to Mademoiselle de Barras the stern message with which she had been charged by her husband. And thus several weeks had passed, and she began to think that his silence upon the subject, notwithstanding his seeing the young French lady at breakfast every morning, amounted to a kind of tacit intimation that the sentence of banishment was not to be carried into immediate execution, but to be kept suspended over the unconscious offender.

It was now six or eight weeks since the hearse carrying away the remains of the ill-fated Sir Wynston Berkley, had driven down the dusky avenue; the autumn was deepening into winter, and as Marston gloomily trod the lonely woods of Dunoran, the withered leaves whirled drearily along his pathway, and the gusts that swayed the mighty branches above him were rude and ungenial. It was a bleak and sombre day, and as he broke into a long and picturesque vista, deep among the most sequestered woods, he suddenly saw before him, and scarcely twenty paces from the spot on which he stood, an apparition, which for some moments absolutely froze him to the earth.

Travel-soiled, tattered, pale, and wasted, John Merton, the murderer, stood before him. He did not exhibit the smallest disposition to turn about and make his escape. On the contrary, he remained perfectly motionless, looking upon his former master with a wild and sorrowful gaze. Marston twice or thrice essayed to speak; his face was white as death, and had he beheld the spectre of the murdered baronet himself, he could not have met the sight with a countenance of ghastlier horror.

"Take me, sir," said Merton, doggedly.

Still Marston did not stir.

"Arrest me, sir, in God's name—here I am," he repeated, dropping his arms by his side. "I'll go with you, wherever you tell me."

"Murderer!" cried Marston, with a sudden burst of furious horror—"murderer—assassin—miscreant!—take *that*."

And, as he spoke, he discharged one of the pistols he always carried about him full at the wretched man. The shot did not take effect, and Merton made no other gesture but to clasp his hands together, with an agonized pressure, while his head sunk upon his breast.

"Shoot me—shoot me," he said, hoarsely; "kill me like a dog: better for me to be dead than what I am."

The report of Marston's pistol had, however, reached another ear; and its ringing echoes had hardly ceased to vibrate among the trees, when a stern shout was heard not fifty yards away, and, breathless and amazed, Charles Marston sprang to the place. His father looked from Merton to him, and from him again to Merton, with a guilty and stupified scowl, still holding the smoking pistol in his hand.

"What—how! Good God—Merton!" ejaculated Charles.

"Ay, sir, Merton—ready to go to gaol, or wherever you will," said the man, recklessly.

"A murderer—a madman—don't believe him," muttered Marston, scarce audibly, with lips as white as wax.

"Do you surrender yourself, Merton?" demanded the young man, sternly, advancing toward him.

"Yes, sir; I desire nothing more—God knows I wish to die," responded he, despairingly, and advancing slowly to meet Charles.

"Come, then," said young Marston, seizing him by the collar—"come quietly to the house. Guilty and unhappy man, you are now my prisoner, and, depend upon it, I shall not let you go."

"I don't want to go, I tell you, sir. I have travelled fifteen miles to-day, to come here and give myself up to the master."

"Accursed madman!" said Marston, unconsciously gazing at the prisoner, and then suddenly rousing himself, he said, "Well, miscreant, you wish to die, and, by ——, you are in a fair way to *have* your wish."

"So best," said the man, doggedly. "I don't want to live—I wish I was in my grave—I wish I was dead a year ago."

Some fifteen minutes aftewards, Merton, accompanied by Marston and his son Charles, entered the hall of the mansion which, not ten weeks before, he had quitted under circumstances so guilty and terrible. When they reached the house, Merton seemed much agitated, and wept bitterly on seeing two or three of his former fellow-servants, who looked on him in silence as they passed, with a gloomy and fearful curiosity. These, too, were succeeded by others, peeping and whispering, and upon one pretence or another, crossing and re-crossing the hall, and stealing hurried glances at the criminal. Merton sate with his face buried in his hands, sobbing, and taking no note of the humiliating scrutiny of which he was the subject. Meanwhile, Marston, pale and agitated, made out his committal, and having sworn in several of his labourers and servants as special constables, dispatched the prisoner in their charge to the county gaol, where, under lock and key, we leave him in safe custody for the present.

After this event, Marston became excited and restless. He scarcely eat or slept, and his health seemed now as much shattered as his spirits had been before. One day he glided into the room in which, as we have said, it was Mrs. Marston's habit frequently to sit alone. His wife was there, and, as he entered, she uttered an exclamation of doubtful joy and surprise. He sate down near her in silence, and for some time looked gloomily on the ground. She did not care to question him, and anxiously waited until he should open the conversation. At length he raised his eyes, and, looking full at her, asked abruptly—

"Well, what about mademoiselle?"

Mrs. Marston was embarrassed, and hesitated.

"I told you what I wished with respect to that young lady some time ago, and commissioned you to acquaint her with my pleasure; and yet I find her still here, and apparently as much established as ever."

Again Mrs. Marston hesitated. She scarcely knew how to confess to him that she had not conveyed his message.

"Don't suppose, Gertrude, that I wish to find fault. I merely wanted to know whether you had told Mademoiselle de Barras, that we were agreed as to the necessity, or expediency, or what you please, of dispensing henceforward with her services. I perceive by your manner that you have not done so. I have no doubt your motive was a kind one, but my decision remains unaltered; and I now assure you again that I wish you to speak to her—I wish you explicitly to let her know my wishes and yours."

"Not *mine*, Richard," she answered, faintly.

"Well, *mine*, then," he replied, roughly. "We shan't quarrel about that."

"And when—how soon—do you wish me to speak to her on this, to both of us, most painful subject?" asked she, with a sigh.

"To-day—this hour—this minute, if you can; in short, the sooner the better," he replied, rising. "I see no reason for holding the thing back any longer. I am sorry my wishes were not complied with immediately. Pray, let there be no further hesitation or delay. I shall expect to learn this evening that all is arranged."

Marston having thus spoken, left her abruptly—went down to his study with a swift step—shut himself in, and throwing himself into a great chair, gave a loose to his agitation, which was extreme.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Marston had sent for Mademoiselle de Barras, anxious to get through her painful task as speedily as possible. The fair French girl speedily presented herself.

"Sit down, mademoiselle," said Mrs. Marston, taking her hand kindly, and drawing her to the priedíeu chair beside herself.

Mademoiselle de Barras sate down, and, as she did so, read the countenance of her patroness with one rapid glance of her flashing eyes. These eyes, however, when Mrs. Marston looked at her the next moment, were sunk softly and sadly upon the floor. There was a heightened colour, however, in her cheek, and a quicker heaving of the bosom, which indicated the excitement of an anticipated and painful disclosure. The outward contrast of the two women, whose hands were

so lovingly locked together, was almost as striking as the moral contrast of their hearts. The one, so chastened, sad, and gentle; the other, so capable of pride and passion—so darkly excitable, and yet, so mysteriously beautiful. The one, like a Niobe, seen in the softest moonshine; the other, a Venus, lighted in the glare of distant fires.

"Mademoiselle, dear mademoiselle, I am so much grieved at what I have to say, that I hardly know how to speak to you," said poor Mrs. Marston, pressing her hand; "but Mr. Marston has twice desired me to tell you, what you will hear with far less pain than it costs me to say it."

Mademoiselle de Barras stole another flashing glance at her companion, but did not speak.

"Mr. Marston still persists, mademoiselle, in desiring that we shall part."

"*Est il possible?*" cried the Frenchwoman, with a genuine start.

"Indeed, mademoiselle, you may well be surprised," said Mrs. Marston, encountering her full and dilated gaze, which, however, dropped again in a moment to the ground. "You may, indeed, naturally be surprised and shocked at this, to me, most severe decision."

"When did he speak last of it?" asked she, rapidly.

"But a few moments since," answered Mrs. Marston.

"Ha!" said mademoiselle, and remained silent and motionless for more than a minute.

"Madame," she cried at last, mournfully, "I suppose, then, I must go; but it tears my heart to leave you and dear Miss Rhoda. I would be very happy if, before departing, you would permit me, dear madame, once more to assure Mr. Marston of my innocence, and, in his presence, to call heaven to witness how unjust are all his suspicions."

"Do so, mademoiselle, and I will add my earnest assurances again; though, heaven knows," she said despondingly, "I anticipate little success; but it is well to leave no chance untried."

Marston was sitting, as we have said, in his library. His agitation had given place to a listless gloom, and he leaned back in his chair, his head supported by his hand, and undisturbed except by the occasional fall of the embers upon the hearth. There was a knock at the chamber door. His back was toward it, and, without turning or moving, he called to the applicant to enter. The door opened—closed again—a light tread was audible—a tall shadow darkened the wall—Marston looked round, and Mademoiselle de Barras was standing before him. Without knowing how or why, he rose, and stood gazing upon her in silence.

"Mademoiselle de Barras," he said at last, in a tone of cold surprise.

"Yes, poor Mademoiselle de Barras," replied the sweet voice of the young Frenchwoman, while her lips hardly moved as the melancholy tones passed them.

"Well, Mademoiselle, what do you desire?" he asked, in the same cold accents, and averting his eyes.

"Ah, Monsieur, do you ask—can you pretend to be ignorant? Have you not sent me a message—a cruel, cruel message?"

She spoke so low and gently, that a person at the other end of the room could hardly have heard her words.

"Yes, Mademoiselle de Barras, I *did* send you a message," he replied, doggedly—"a cruel one you will scarcely presume to call it, when you reflect upon your own conduct, and the circumstances which have provoked the measures I have taken."

"What have I done, Monsieur?—what circumstances do you mean?" asked she, plaintively.

"What have you done! A pretty question truly—ha, ha!" he repeated, bitterly, and then added with suppressed vehemence—"ask your own heart, Mademoiselle."

"I have asked—I do ask, and my heart answers—*nothing*," she replied, raising her fine melancholy eyes for a moment to his face."

"It lies, then," he retorted, with a fierce scoff.

"Monsieur, before heaven I swear, you wrong me foully," she said earnestly, clasping her hands together.

"Did ever woman say she was accused *rightly*, Mademoiselle?" retorted Marston, with a sneer.

"I don't know—I don't care; I only know that *I* am innocent," continued she, piteously. "I call heaven to witness you have wronged me."

"Wronged you!—why, after all,

with what have I charged you?" said he, scoffingly; "but let that pass. I have formed my opinions—arrived at my conclusions; if I have not named them broadly, you at least seem to understand their nature thoroughly. I know the world; I am no novice in the arts of women, Mademoiselle. Reserve your vows and attestations for schoolboys and simpletons; they are sadly thrown away upon me."

Marston paced to and fro, with his hands thrust into his pockets, as he thus spoke.

"Then you don't, or rather you will not believe what I tell you?" said she, imploringly.

"No," he answered, drily and slowly, as he passed her; "I don't, and I won't (as you say) believe one word of it, so, pray spare yourself any further trouble about the matter."

She raised her head, and darted after him a glance that seemed absolutely to blaze, and at the same time smote her little hand fast clenched upon her breast; the words, however, that trembled on her pale lips were not uttered; her eyes were again cast down, and her fingers played with the little locket that hung round her neck.

"I must make, before I go," she said, with a deep sigh and a melancholy voice, "one confidence—one last confidence; judge me by it. You cannot choose, but believe me now; it is a secret, and it must even here be *whispered, whispered, whispered!*"

As she spoke, the colour fled from her face, and her tones became so strange and resolute, that Marston turned short upon his heel and stopped before her. She looked in his face; he frowned, but lowered his eyes. She drew nearer, laid her hand upon his shoulder, and whispered for a few moments in his ear. He raised his face suddenly; its features were sharp and fixed; its hue was changed; it was livid and moveless, like a face cut in gray stone. He staggered back a little, and a little more, and then a little more, and fell backward. Fortunately the chair in which he had been sitting received him, and he lay there insensible as a corpse. When at last his eyes opened, there was no gleam of triumph—no shade of anger, nothing perceptible of guilt or menace in the young woman's countenance; the flush had returned to her cheeks; her dimpled chin had sunk upon her full, white throat; sorrow, shame, and pride seemed struggling in her handsome face; and she stood before him like a beautiful penitent, who has just made a strange and humbling shrift to her father confessor.

Next day, Marston was mounting his horse for a solitary ride through his park, when Doctor Danvers rode abruptly into the courtyard from the back entrance. Marston touched his hat, and said—

"I don't stand on forms with you, doctor, and you, I know, will waive ceremony with me. You will find Mrs. Marston at home."

"Nay, my dear sir," interrupted the clergyman, sitting firm in his saddle, "my business lies with *you* to-day."

"The devil it does!" said Marston, with discontented surprise.

"Truly it does, sir," repeated he, with a look of gentle reproof, for the profanity of Marston's ejaculation, far more than the rudeness of his manner, offended him, "and I grieve that your surprise should have somewhat carried you away ——"

"Well, then, Doctor Danvers," interrupted Marston, drily, and without heeding his concluding remark, "if you really *have* business with me, it is, at all events, of no very pressing kind, and may be as well told after supper as now; so, pray, go into the house and rest yourself—we can talk together in the evening."

"My horse is not tired," said the clergyman, patting his steed's neck; "and if you do not object, I will ride by your side for a short time, and as we go, I can say out what I have to tell."

"Well, well, be it so," said Marston, with suppressed impatience, and without more ceremony, he rode slowly along the avenue, and turned off upon the soft sward in the direction of the wildest portion of his wooded demesne, the clergyman keeping close beside him. They proceeded some little way at a walk before Doctor Danvers spoke.

"I have been twice or thrice with that unhappy man," at length he said.

"*What* unhappy man?—unhappiness is no distinguishing singularity—is it?" said Marston, sharply.

"No, truly, you have well said," replied Dr. Danvers; "true it is that man is born unto trouble as the sparks

fly upward. I speak, however, of your servant, Merton—a *most* unhappy wretch."

"Ha! you have been with *him*, you say?" replied Marston, with evident interest and anxiety.

"Yes, several times, and conversed with him long and gravely," continued the clergyman.

"Humph! I thought that had been the chaplain's business, not yours, my good friend," observed Marston.

"He has been unwell," replied Dr. Danvers; "and thus, for a day or two, I took his duty, and this poor man, Merton, having known something of me, preferred seeing me rather than a stranger—and so, at the chaplain's desire and his, I continued my visits."

"Well, and you have taught him to pray and sing psalms, I suppose; and what has come of it all?" demanded Marston, testily.

"He does pray, indeed—poor man! and I trust his prayers are heard with mercy at the throne of grace," said his companion, in his earnestness disregarding the scoffing tone of his companion. "He is full of compunction, and admits his guilt."

"Ho! that is well—well for *himself*—well for his *soul*, at least—you are sure of it—he confesses—confesses his guilt?"

Marston put his question so rapidly and excitedly, that the clergyman looked at him with a slight expression of surprise—and recovering himself, he added, in an unconcerned tone—

"Well, well—it was just as well he did so; the evidence is too clear for doubt or mystification; he knew he had no chance, and has taken the soundest course—and, doubtless, the best for his hopes hereafter."

"I did not question him upon the subject," said Doctor Danvers; "I even declined to hear him speak upon it at first—but he told me he was resolved to offer no defence, and that he saw the finger of God in the fate which had overtaken him."

"He will plead guilty, then, I suppose?" suggested Marston, watching the countenance of his companion with an anxious and somewhat sinister eye.

"His words seem to imply so much," answered he; "and having thus frankly owned his guilt, and avowed his resolution to let the law take its due course in his case, without obstruction or evasion, I urged him to complete the grand work he had begun, and to confess to you, or to some other magistrate fully, and in detail, every circumstance connected with the perpetration of the dreadful deed."

Marston knit his brows, and rode on for some minutes in silence. At length, he said abruptly—

"In *this*, it seems to me, sir, you a little exceeded your commission."

"How so, my dear sir?" asked the clergyman.

"Why, sir," answered Marston, "the man may possibly change his mind before the day of trial, and it is the hangman's office, not yours, my good sir, to fasten the halter about his neck. You will pardon my freedom; but, were this deposition made as you suggest, it would undoubtedly hang him."

"God forbid, Mr. Marston," rejoined Danvers, "that *I* should induce the unhappy man to forfeit his last chances of escape, and to shut the door of human mercy against himself, but on this he seems already resolved; he says so; he has solemnly declared his resolution to me—and even against my warning, again and again reiterated the same declaration."

"*That* I should have thought quite enough, were *I* in your place, without inviting a detailed description of the whole process by which this detestable butchery was consummated. What more than the simple knowledge of the man's guilt does any mortal desire—guilty, or not guilty, is the plain question which the law asks, and no more; take my advice, sir, as a poor Protestant layman, and leave the arts of the confessional and inquisition to popish priests."

"Nay, Mr. Marston, you greatly misconceive me; as matters stand, there exists among the coroner's jury, and thus among the public, some faint and unfounded suspicion of the possibility of Merton's having had an accessory or accomplice in the perpetration of this foul murder.

"It is a lie, sir—a malignant, d—d lie—the jury believe no such thing, nor the public neither," said Marston, starting in his saddle, and speaking in a voice of thunder; "you have been

crammed with lies, sir; malicious, unmeaning, vindictive lies; lies invented to asperse my family, and torture my feelings—suggested in my presence by that scoundrel Mervyn, and scouted by the common sense of the jury."

"I do assure you," replied Doctor Danvers, in a voice which seemed scarcely audible, after the stunning and passionate explosion of Marston's wrath, "I did not imagine that you could feel thus sorely upon the point, nay, I thought that you yourself were not without such painful doubts."

"Again, I tell you, sir," said Marston, in a tone somewhat calmer, but no less stern, "such doubts as you describe have *no* existence; your unsuspecting ear has been alarmed by a vindictive wretch, an old scoundrel who has scarce a passion left but spite towards me—few such there are, thank God—few such villains as would, from a man's very calamities distil poison to kill the peace and character of his family."

"I am sorry, Mr. Marston," said the clergyman, "you have formed so ill an opinion of a neighbour, and I am very sure that Mr. Mervyn meant *you* no ill in frankly expressing whatever doubts still rested on his mind, after the evidence was taken."

"He did—the scoundrel!" said Marston, furiously striking his hand, in which his whip was clutched, upon his thigh—"he *did* mean to wound and torture me; and with the same object he persists in circulating what he calls his doubts. Meant me no ill! forsooth! why, my good God, sir, could any man be so stupid as not to perceive that the suggestion of such suspicions—absurd, contradictory, incredible as they were—was precisely the thing to exasperate feelings, God knows, sufficiently troubled already; and not content with raising the question, where it was scouted, as I said, as soon as named, the vindictive slanderer proceeds to propagate and publish his pretended surmises—d——n him!"

"Mr. Marston, you will pardon me when I say that, as a Christian minister, I cannot suffer a spirit so ill as that you manifest, and language so unseemly as that you have just uttered, to pass unreproved," said Danvers, solemnly. "If you will cherish those bitter and unchristian feelings, at least for the brief space that I am with you, command your fierce, unbecoming words."

Marston was about to make a sneering retort, but restrained himself, and turned his head away.

"The wretched man himself appears now very anxious to make some further disclosures," resumed Doctor Danvers, after a pause, "and I recommended him to make them to *you*, Mr. Marston, as the most natural depository of such a statement."

"Well, Mr. Danvers, to cut the matter short, as it appears that a confession of some sort is to be made, be it so. I will attend and receive it. The judges will not be here for eight or ten weeks to come, so there is no great hurry about it. I shall ride down to the town, and see him in the jail some time within the next week."

With this assurance, Marston parted from the old clergyman, and rode on alone through the furze and fern of his wild and sombre park.

After supper that evening, Marston found himself alone in the parlour with his wife. Mrs. Marston availed herself of the opportunity to redeem her pledge to Mademoiselle de Barras. She was not aware of the strange interview which had taken place between him and the lady for whom she pleaded. The result of her renewed entreaties perhaps the reader has anticipated. Marston listened, doubted—listened, hesitated again—put questions, pondered the answers—debated the matter inwardly, and at last gruffly consented to give the young lady another trial, and permit her to remain for some time longer. Poor Mrs. Marston, little suspecting the dreadful truth, overwhelmed her husband with gratitude for granting to her entreaties (as he had predetermined to do) this fatal boon. Not caring to protract this scene—either from a disinclination to listen to expressions of affection, which had long lost their charm for him, and had become even positively distasteful, or perhaps from some instinctive recoil from the warm expression of gratitude from lips which, were the truth revealed, might justly have trembled with execration and reproach, he abruptly left the room, and Mrs. Marston, full of her good news, hastened, in the kindness of her heart, to communicate the fancied result of her

advocacy to Mademoiselle de Barras.

It was about a week after this, that Marston was one evening surprised in his study by the receipt of the following letter from Dr. Danvers:—

"My dear Sir,—You will be shocked to hear that Merton is most dangerously ill, and at this moment in imminent peril. He is thoroughly conscious of his situation, and himself regards it as a merciful interposition of Providence to spare him the disgrace and terror of the dreadful fate which he anticipated. The unhappy man has twice repeated his anxious desire, this day, to state some facts connected with the murder of the late Sir Wynston Berkley, which, he says, it is of the utmost moment that you should hear. He says that he could not leave the world in peace without having made this disclosure, which he especially desires to make to yourself, and entreats that you will come to receive his communication as early as you can in the morning. This is indeed needful, as the physician says that he is fast sinking. I offer no apology for adding my earnest solicitations to those of the dying man; and am, dear sir, your very obedient servant, "J. Danvers."

"He regards it as a merciful interposition of Providence!" muttered Marston, as he closed the letter, with a sneer. "Well, some men have odd notions of mercy and providence, to be sure; but if it pleases *him*, certainly *I* shall not complain, for one."

Marston was all this evening in better spirits than he had enjoyed for months, or even years. A mountain seemed to have been lifted from his heart. He joined in the conversation during and after supper, listened with apparent interest, talked with animation, and even laughed and jested. It is needless to say all this flowed not from the healthy cheer of a heart at ease, but from the excited and almost feverish sense of sudden relief.

Next morning, Marston rode into the old-fashioned assize town, at the further end of which the dingy and grated front of the jail looked warningly out upon the rustic passengers. He passed the sentries, and made his inquiries of the official at the hatch. He was relieved from the necessity of pushing these into detail, however, by the appearance of the physician, who at that moment passed from the interior of the prison.

"Doctor Danvers told me he expected to see you here this morning," said the medical man, after the customary salutation had been interchanged. "Your call, I believe, is connected with the prisoner John Merton?"

"Yes, sir, so it is," said Marston. "Is he in a condition, pray, to make a statement of considerable length?"

"Far from it, Mr. Marston; he has but a few hours to live," answered the physician, "and is now insensible; but I believe he last night saw Doctor Danvers, and told him whatever was weighing upon his mind."

"Ha!—and can you say where Dr. Danvers now is?" inquired Marston, anxiously and hurriedly. "Not *here*, is he?"

"No; but I saw him, as I came here, not ten minutes since, ride into the town. It is market-day, and you will probably find him somewhere in the high street for an hour or two to come," answered he.

Marston thanked him, and, lost in abstraction, rode down to the little inn, entered a sitting-room, and wrote a hurried line to Dr. Danvers, entreating his attendance *there*, as a place where they might converse less interruptedly than in the street; and committing this note to the waiter, with the injunction to deliver it at once, and the information where Dr. Danvers was probably to be found, he awaited, with intense and agitating anxiety, the arrival of the clergyman.

It was not for nearly ten minutes, however, which his impatience magnified into an eternity, that the well-known voice of Dr. Danvers reached him from the little hall. It was in vain that Marston strove to curb his violent agitation: his heart swelled as if it would smother him; he felt, as it were, the chill of death pervade his frame, and he could scarcely see the door through which he momentarily expected the entrance of the clergyman.

A few minutes more, and Dr. Danvers entered the little apartment.

"My dear sir," said he, gravely and earnestly, as he grasped the cold hand

of Marston, "I am rejoiced to see you. I have matters of great moment and the strangest mystery to lay before you."

"I dare say—I was sure—that is, I suspected so much," answered Marston, breathing fast, and looking very pale. "I heard at the prison that the murderer, Merton, was fast dying, and now is in an unconscious state; and from the physician, that you had seen him, at his urgent entreaty, last night. My mind misgives me, sir. I fear I know not what. I long, yet dread, to hear the wretched man's confession. For God's sake tell me, does it implicate anybody else in his guilt?"

"No; no one specifically; but it has thrown a hideous additional mystery over the occurrence. Listen to me, my dear sir, and the whole narrative, as he stated it to me, shall be related now to you," said Dr. Danvers.

Marston had closed the door carefully, and they sate down together at the further end of the apartment. Marston, breathless and ghastly pale; his lips compressed—his brows knit—and his dark, dilated gaze, fixed immovably upon the speaker. Mr. Danvers, on the other hand, tranquil and solemn, and with, perhaps, some shade of awe overcasting the habitual sweetness of his countenance.

"His confession was a strange one," renewed Dr. Danvers, shaking his head gravely. He said that the first idea of the crime was suggested by Sir Wynston's man accidentally mentioning, a few days after their arrival, that his master slept with his bank-notes, to the amount of some hundreds of pounds, in a pocket-book under his pillow. He declared that as the man mentioned this circumstance, something muttered the infernal suggestion in his ear, and from that moment he was the slave of that one idea; it was ever present with him. He contended against it in vain—he dreaded and abhorred it; but still it possessed him; he felt his power of resistance yielding. This horrible stranger which had stolen into his heart, waxed in power and importunity, and tormented him day and night. He resolved to fly from the house. He gave notice to you and Mrs. Marston of his intended departure; but accident protracted his stay until that fatal night which sealed his doom. The influence which had mastered him, forced him to rise from his bed, and take the knife—the discovery of which afterwards helped to convict him—and led him to Sir Wynston's chamber; he entered—it was a moonlight night."

Here the clergyman, glancing round the room, lowered his voice, and advanced his lips so near to Marston that their heads nearly touched. In this tone and attitude he continued his narrative for a few minutes. At the end of this brief space, Marston rose up slowly, and with a movement backward, every feature stung with horror, and saying, in a long whisper, the one word, "yes," which seemed like the hiss of a snake before he makes his last deadly spring. Both were silent for a time. At last Marston broke out with hoarse vehemence—

"Dreadful — horrible — oh, God! God!—my God! how frightful!"

And throwing himself into a chair, he clasped his hands across his eyes and forehead, while the sweat of agony literally poured down his pale face.

"Truly it is so," said the clergyman, scarcely above his breath; and, after a long interval—"horrible, indeed!"

"Well," said Marston, rising suddenly to his feet, wiping the dews of horror from his face, and looking wildly round, like one newly waked from a nightmare, "I must make the most of this momentous and startling disclosure. I shall spare no pains to come at the truth," said he, energetically. "Meanwhile, my dear sir, for the sake of justice and of mercy, observe secrecy. Leave me to sift this matter; give no note anywhere that we *suspect*. Observe this reserve and security, and with it, detection will follow. Breathe but one word, and you arm the guilty with double caution, and turn licentious gossip loose upon the fame of an innocent and troubled family. Once more I intreat—I expect—I implore silence—silence, at least, for the present—*silence!*"

"I quite agree with you, my dear Mr. Marston," answered Dr. Danvers. "I have not divulged one syllable of that poor wretch's confession, save to yourself alone. You, as a magistrate, a relative of the murdered gentleman, and the head of that establishment among whom the guilt rests, are invested

with an interest in detecting, and powers of sifting the truth in this matter, such as none other possesses. I clearly see with you, too, the inexpediency and folly of talking, for talking's sake, of this affair. I mean to keep my counsel, and shall most assuredly, irrespectively even of your request—which should, however, of course, have weight with me—maintain a strict and cautious silence upon this subject."

Some little time longer they remained together, and Marston, buried in strange thoughts, took his leave, and rode slowly back to Dunoran.

Months passed away—a year, and more—and though no new character appeared upon the stage, the relations which had subsisted among the old ones became, in some respects, very materially altered. A gradual and disagreeable change came over Mademoiselle de Barras' manner; her affectionate attentions to Mrs. Marston became less and less frequent; nor was the change merely confined to this growing coldness; there was something of a positive and still more unpleasant kind in the alteration which we have noted. There was a certain independence and *insouciance*, conveyed in a hundred intangible but significant little incidents and looks—a something which, without being open to formal rebuke or remonstrance, yet bordered, in effect, upon impertinence, and even insolence. This indescribable and provoking self-assertion, implied in glances, tones, emphasis, and general bearing, surprised Mrs. Marston far more than it irritated her. As often as she experienced one of these studied slights or insinuated impertinences, she revolved in her own mind all the incidents of their past intercourse, in the vain endeavour to recollect some one among them which could possibly account for the offensive change so manifest in the conduct of the young Frenchwoman.

Mrs. Marston, although she sometimes rebuked these artful affronts by a grave look, a cold tone, or a distant manner, yet had too much dignity to engage in a petty warfare of annoyance, and had, in reality, no substantial and well-defined ground of complaint against her, such as would have warranted her either in taking the young lady herself to task, or in bringing her conduct under the censure of Marston.

One evening it happened that Mrs. Marston and Mademoiselle de Barras had been left alone together after the supper-party had dispersed. They had been for a long time silent, and Mrs. Marston resolved to improve the *tête-à-tête*, for the purpose of eliciting from mademoiselle an explanation of her strange behaviour.

"Mademoiselle," said she, "I have lately observed a very marked change in your conduct to me."

"*Indeed!*" said the Frenchwoman.

"Yes, mademoiselle; you must be yourself perfectly aware of that change; it is a studied and intentional alteration," continued Mrs. Marston, in a gentle but dignified tone; "and although I have felt some doubt as to whether it were advisable, so long as you observe toward me the forms of external respect, and punctually discharge the duties you have undertaken, to open any discussion whatever upon the subject; yet I have thought it better to give you a fair opportunity of explaining frankly, should you desire to do so, the feelings and impressions under which you are acting."

"Ah, you are very obliging, madame," said she, coolly.

"It is quite clear, mademoiselle, that you have either misunderstood me, or that you are dissatisfied with your situation among us: your conduct cannot otherwise be accounted for," said Mrs. Marston, gravely.

"My conduct—*ma foi!* what conduct?" retorted the handsome Frenchwoman, confidently, and with a disdainful glance.

"If you question the fact, mademoiselle," said the elder lady, "it is enough. Your ungracious manner and ungentle looks, I presume, arise from some apparently sufficient and well-defined cause, of which, however, I know nothing."

"I really was not aware," said Mademoiselle de Barras, with a supercilious smile, "that my looks and my manner were subjected to so rigid a criticism, or that it was my duty to regulate both according to so nice and difficult a standard."

"Well, mademoiselle," continued Mrs. Marston, "it is plain that whatever may be the cause of your dissatisfaction, you are resolved against con-

fiding it to me. I only wish to know frankly from your own lips, whether you have formed a wish to leave this situation: if so, I entreat of you to declare it freely."

"You are very obliging, indeed, madame," said the pretty foreigner, drily, "but I have no such wish, at least at present."

"Very well, mademoiselle," replied Mrs. Marston, with gentle dignity; "I regret your want of candour, on your own account. You would, I am sure, be much happier, were you to deal frankly with me."

"May I now have your permission, madame, to retire to my room?" asked the French girl, rising, and making a low courtesy—"that is, if madame has nothing further to censure."

"Certainly, mademoiselle; I have nothing further to say," replied the elder lady.

The Frenchwoman made another and a deeper courtesy, and withdrew. Mrs. Marston, however, heard, as she was designed to do, the young lady tittering and whispering to herself, as she lighted her candle in the hall. This scene mortified and grieved poor Mrs. Marston inexpressibly. She was little, if at all, accessible to emotions of anger, and certainly none such mingled in the feelings with which she regarded Mademoiselle de Barras. But she had found in this girl a companion, and even a confidante in her melancholy solitude; she had believed her affectionate, sympathetic, tender, and the disappointment was as bitter as unimagined.

The annoyances which she was fated to receive from Mademoiselle de Barras, were destined, however, to grow in number and in magnitude. The Frenchwoman sometimes took a fancy, for some unrevealed purpose, to talk a good deal to Mrs. Marston, and on such occasions would persist, notwithstanding that lady's marked reserve and discouragement, in chatting away, as if she were conscious that her conversation was the most welcome entertainment possible to her really unwilling auditor. No one of their interviews did she ever suffer to close without in some way or other suggesting or insinuating something mysterious and untold to the prejudice of Mr. Marston. Those vague and intangible hints, whose meaning, for an instant legible and terrific, seemed in another moment to dissolve and disappear, tortured Mrs. Marston like the intrusions of some spectre, vanishing as soon as revealed; and this, along with the portentous change, rather *felt* than visible, in mademoiselle's conduct toward her, invested the beautiful Frenchwoman, in the eyes of her former friend and patroness, with an indefinable character that was not only repulsive but formidable.

Mrs. Marston's feelings with respect to this person were still further disturbed by the half-conveyed hints and inuendoes of her own maid, who never lost an opportunity of insinuating her intense dislike of the Frenchwoman, and appeared perpetually to be upon the very verge of making some explicit charges, or some shocking revelations, respecting her, which, however, she as invariably evaded; and even when Mrs. Marston once or twice insisted upon her explaining her meaning distinctly, she eluded her mistress's desire, and left her still in the same uneasy uncertainty.

Marston, on his part, however much his conduct might tend to confirm suspicion, certainly did nothing to dissipate the painful and undefined apprehensions respecting himself, which Mademoiselle de Barras, with such malign and mysterious industry, laboured to raise. His spirits and temper were liable to strange fluctuations. In the midst of that excited gaiety, to which, until lately, he had been so long a stranger, would sometimes intervene paroxysms of the blackest despair, all the ghastlier for the contrast, and with a suddenness so abrupt and overwhelming, that one might have fancied him crossed by the shadow of some terrific apparition, unseen by all but his own fascinated gaze. Sometimes, for a whole day, or even more, he would withdraw himself from the society of his family, and, in morose and moody solitude, take his meals alone in his library, and steal out unattended to wander among the thickets and glades of his park. Sometimes, again, he would sit for hours in the room which had been Sir Wynston's, and, with a kind of horrible resolution, often loiter there till after nightfall. In such hours, the servants would listen with curious awe, as they heard his step, pacing to and fro, in that deserted and

inauspicious chamber, while his voice, in broken sentences, was also imperfectly audible, as if maintaining a muttered dialogue. These eccentric practices gradually invested him, in the eyes of his domestics, with a certain preternatural mystery, which enhanced the fear with which they habitually regarded him, and was subsequently confirmed by his giving orders to have the furniture taken out of the ominous suite of rooms, and the doors nailed up and secured. He gave no reason for this odd and abrupt measure, and gossip of course reported that the direction had originated in his having encountered the spectre of the murdered baronet, in one of these strange and unseasonable visits to the scene of the fearful catastrophe.

In addition to all this, Marston's conduct towards his wife became strangely capricious. He avoided her society more than ever, and when he did happen to exchange a few words with her, they were sometimes harsh and violent, and, at others, remorsefully gentle and sad, and this without any changes of conduct upon her part to warrant the wayward uncertainty of his treatment. Under all these circumstances, Mrs. Marston's unhappiness and uneasiness greatly increased. Mademoiselle de Barras, too, upon several late occasions, had begun to assume a tone of authority and dictation which justly offended the mistress of the establishment. Meanwhile Charles Marston had returned to Oxford, and Rhoda, no longer enjoying those happy walks with her brother, which had been made still more happy by their often leading her into the society of her young neighbours of Newton Park, pursued her light and easy studies with Mademoiselle de Barras, and devoted her leisure hours to the loved society of her mother.

One day Mrs. Marston, sitting in her own room with Rhoda, had happened to call in her own maid, to take down and carefully dust some richly-bound volumes which filled a bookcase in the little chamber.

"You have been crying, Willett," said Mrs. Marston, observing that the young woman's eyes were red and swollen.

"Indeed and I was, ma'am," she replied, reluctantly, "and I could not help it, so I could not."

"Why, what has happened to vex you—has any one ill-treated you?" said Mrs. Marston, who had an esteem for the poor girl. "Come—come—you must not fret about it; only tell me what has vexed you. Come, come, you really must not be foolish."

"Oh! ma'am, no one has ill-used *me*, ma'am; but I can't but be vexed sometimes, ma'am, and fretted to see how things is going on. I have one wish—just one wish, ma'am—and if I got *that*, I'd ask no more," said the girl.

"And what *is* it?" asked Mrs. Marston; "what do you wish for?—speak plainly, Willett, what is it?"

"Ah! ma'am, if I said it maybe you might not be pleased. Don't ask me, ma'am," said the girl, dusting the books very hard, and tossing them down again with angry emphasis. "I don't desire anybody's harm, God knows, but for all that I wish what I wish, and that is the truth."

"Why, Willett, I really cannot account for your strange habit of lately hinting, and insinuating, and always speaking riddles, and refusing to explain your meaning. What *do* you mean?—speak plainly; if there are any dishonest practices going on, it is your duty to say so distinctly."

"Oh! ma'am, it is just a wish I have. I wish ——; but it's no matter. If I could once see the house clear of that Frenchwoman ——"

"If you mean Mademoiselle de Barras, she is a *lady*," interrupted Mrs. Marston.

"Well, ma'am, I beg pardon," continued the woman; "lady or no lady, it is all one to me; for I am very sure, ma'am, she'll never leave the house till there is something bad comes about; and—and ——. I can't bring myself to talk to you about her, ma'am. I can't say what I want to tell you; but—but ——. Oh, ma'am, for God's sake, try and get her out, any way, no matter how—try and get rid of her."

As she said this, the poor girl burst into a passionate agony of tears, and Mrs. Marston and Rhoda looked on in silent amazement, while she for some minutes continued to sob and weep.

The party were suddenly recalled from their various reveries by a knock at the chamber-door—it opened, and the subject of the girl's deprecatory

entreaty entered. There was something unusually excited and assured in Mademoiselle de Barras' air and countenance; perhaps she had a suspicion that she had been the topic of their conversation. At all events, she looked round upon them with a smile, in which there was something supercilious, and even defiant; and, without waiting to be invited, sate herself down with a haughty air.

"I was about to ask you to sit down, mademoiselle, but you have anticipated me," said Mrs. Marston, gravely. "You have something to say to me, I suppose; I am quite at leisure, so pray let me hear it now."

"Thank you—thank you, madame," replied she, with a sharp, and even scornful glance; "I ought to have asked your permission to sit; I forgot to do so; but you have condescended to give it without my doing so; that was very kind—very kind, indeed."

"But I wish to know, mademoiselle, whether you have anything very particular to say to me?" said Mrs. Marston.

"You wish to know!—and why, pray, madame?" asked Mademoiselle de Barras, sharply.

"Because, unless it is something very urgent, I should prefer your talking to me some other time; as, at present, I desire to be alone with my daughter."

"Oh, ho! I ought to ask pardon again," said mademoiselle, with the same glance, and the same smile. "I find I am *de trop*—quite in the way. Helas! I am very unfortunate to-day."

Mademoiselle de Barras made not the slightest movement, and it was evident that she was resolved to prolong her stay, in sheer defiance of Mrs. Marston's wishes.

"Mademoiselle, I conclude from your silence that you have nothing very pressing to say, and therefore must request that you will have the goodness to leave me for the present," said Mrs. Marston, who felt that the spirit of the French girl's conduct was too apparent not to have been understood by Rhoda and the servant, and that it was of a kind, for example sake, impossible to be submitted to, or tolerated.

Mademoiselle de Barras darted a fiery and insolent glance at Mrs. Marston, and was, doubtless, upon the point of precipitating the open quarrel which was impending, by setting her authority at defiance; but she checked herself, and changed her line of operations.

"We are *not* alone, madame," she said, with a heightened colour, and a slight toss of the head. "I was about to speak of Mr. Marston. I had something—not much, I confess—to say; but before servants I shan't speak—nor, indeed, *now* at all. So, madame, as you desire it, I shall not further interrupt you. Come, Miss Rhoda, come to the music-room, if you please, and finish your practice for to-day."

"You forget, mademoiselle, that I wish to have my daughter with me at present," said Mrs. Marston.

"I am very sorry, madame," said the French lady, with the same heightened colour and unpleasant smile, and her finely-pencilled brows just discernibly knit, so as to give a novel and menacing expression to her beautiful face—"I am very sorry, madame, but she must, so long as I remain accountable for her education, complete her allotted exercises at the appointed hours; and nothing shall, I assure you, with my consent, interfere with these duties. Come, Miss Rhoda, precede me, if you please, to the music-room. Come, come."

"Stay where you are, Rhoda," said Mrs. Marston, firmly and gently, and betraying no symptom of excitement, except in a slight tremor of her voice, and a faint flush upon her cheek.—"Stay where you are, my dear child. I am your *mother*, and, next to your father, have the first claim upon your obedience. Mademoiselle," she continued, addressing the Frenchwoman, calmly but firmly, "my daughter will remain here for some time longer, and you will have the goodness to withdraw. I insist upon it, Mademoiselle de Barras."

"I will not leave the room, I assure you, madame, without my pupil," retorted mademoiselle, with resolute insolence. "Your husband, madame, has invested me with this authority over my pupil, and she *shall* obey me. Miss Rhoda, I say again, go down to the music-room."

"Remain where you are, Rhoda," said Mrs. Marston again. "Mademoiselle, you have long been acting as if your object were to provoke me to

part with you. I find it impossible any longer to overlook this grossly disrespectful conduct—conduct of which I had, indeed, believed you absolutely incapable. Willett," she continued, addressing the maid, who was evidently bursting with rage at the scene she had just witnessed—"your master is, I believe, in the library—go down, and tell him that I entreat him to come here immediately."

The maid started on her mission with angry alacrity, darting a venomous glance at the handsome Frenchwoman as she passed.

Mademoiselle de Barras, meanwhile, sate, listless and defiant, in her chair, and tapping her little foot with angry excitement upon the floor. Rhoda sate close by her mother, holding her hand fast, and looking frightened, perplexed, and as if she were on the point of weeping. Mrs. Marston, though flushed and excited, yet maintained her dignified and grave demeanour. And thus, in silence, did they all three await the arrival of the arbiter to whom Mrs. Marston had so promptly appealed.

A few minutes more, and Marston entered the room. Mademoiselle's expression changed as he did so to one of dejected and sorrowful submission; and, as Marston's eye lighted upon her, his brow darkened, and his face grew pale.

"Well, well—what is it?—what is all this?" he said, glancing with a troubled eye from one to the other. "Speak, some one. Mrs. Marston, *you* sent for me—what is it?"

"I want to know, Mr. Marston, from your own lips," said the lady, in reply, "whether Rhoda is to obey me or Mademoiselle de Barras?"

"Bah!—a question of women's prerogative," said Marston, with muttered vehemence.

"Of a *wife's* and a *mother's* prerogative, Richard," said Mrs. Marston, with gentle emphasis; "a very simple question, and one I should have thought needing no deliberation to decide it."

"Well, child," said he, turning to Rhoda, with angry irony, "pray what is all this fuss about? You are a very ill-used young lady, I dare aver. Pray what cruelties does Mademoiselle de Barras propose inflicting upon you, that you need to appeal thus to your mother for protection?"

"You quite mistake me, Richard," interposed Mrs. Marston; "Rhoda is perfectly passive in this matter. I simply wish to learn from you, in mademoiselle's presence, whether I or she is to command my daughter?"

"*Command!*" said Marston, evading the direct appeal; "and pray what is all this *commanding* about?—what do you want the girl to do?"

"*I* wish her to remain here with me for a little time, and mademoiselle, knowing this, desires her instantly to go to the music-room, and leave me. That is all," said Mrs. Marston.

"And pray, is there nothing to make her going to the music-room advisable or necessary? Has she no music to learn, or studies to pursue? Psha! Mrs. Marston, what needs all this noise about nothing? Go, miss," he added, sharply and peremptorily, addressing Rhoda—"go this moment to the music-room."

The girl glided from the room, and mademoiselle, as she followed, shot a glance at Mrs. Marston, which wounded and humbled her in the dust.

"Oh! Richard, Richard, if you knew all, you would not have subjected me to this indignity," she said; and throwing her arms about his neck, she wept, for the first time for many a long year, upon his breast.

Marston was embarrassed and agitated. He disengaged her arms from his neck, and placed her gently in a chair. She sobbed on for some time in silence—a silence which Marston himself did not essay to break. He walked to the door, apparently with the intention of leaving her. He hesitated, however, and returned; took a hurried turn through the room; hesitated again; sat down; then returned to the door, not to depart, but to close it carefully, and walked gloomily to the window, whence he looked forth, buried in agitating and absorbing thoughts.

"Richard, to you this seems a trifling thing; but indeed it is not so," said Mrs. Marston, sadly.

"You are very right, Gertrude," he said, quickly, and almost with a start; "it is very far from a trifling thing; it is very important."

"You don't blame me, Richard?" said she.

"I blame nobody," said he.

"Indeed I never meant to offend you, Richard," she urged.

"Of course not; no, no; I never said so," he interrupted, sarcastically; "what could you gain by that?"

"Oh! Richard, better feelings have governed me," she said, in a melancholy and reproachful tone.

"Well, well, I suppose so," he said; and after an interval, he added, abstractedly, "This cannot, however, go on; no, no—it *cannot*. Sooner or later, it must have come; better at once—better *now*."

"What do you mean, Richard?" she said, greatly alarmed, she knew not why. "What are you resolving upon? Dear Richard, in mercy tell me. I implore of you, tell me."

"Why, Gertrude, you seem to me to fancy that, because I don't talk about what is passing, that I don't *see* it either. Now this is quite a mistake," said Marston, calmly and resolutely. "I have long observed your growing dislike of Mademoiselle de Barras. I have thought it over; this *fracas* of to-day has determined me—it is decisive. I suppose you now wish her to *go*, as earnestly as you once wished her to stay. You need not answer. I know it. I neither ask nor care to whose fault I am to attribute these changed feelings—female caprice accounts sufficiently for it; but whatever the cause, the effect is undeniable; and the only way to deal satisfactorily with *it*, is to dismiss mademoiselle peremptorily and at once. You need take no part in the matter; I take it all upon myself. To-morrow morning she shall have left this house. I have said it, and am perfectly resolved."

As he thus spoke, as if to avoid the possibility of any further discussion, he turned abruptly from her, and left the room.

The extreme agitation which she had just undergone, combined with her physical delicacy to bring on an hysterical attack; and poor Mrs. Marston, with an aching head and a heavy heart, lay down upon her bed. She had swallowed an opiate, and before ten o'clock upon that night, an eventful one as it proved, she had sank into a profound slumber.

Some hours after this, she became in a confused way conscious of her husband's presence in the room. He was walking, with an agitated mien, up and down the chamber, and casting from time to time looks of great trouble toward the bed where she lay. Though the presence of her husband was a strange and long unwonted occurrence there, and at such an hour, and though she felt the strangeness of the visit, the power of the opiate overwhelmed her so, that she could only see this apparition gliding back and forward before her with the passive wonder and curiosity with which one awaits the issue of an interesting dream.

For a time she lay once more in an uneasy sleep; but still, throughout even this, she was conscious of his presence; and when, a little while after, she again saw him, he was not walking to and fro before the foot of the bed, but sitting beside her, with one hand laid upon the pillow on which her head was resting, the other supporting his chin. He was looking steadfastly upon her, with a changed face, an expression of bitter sorrow, compunction, and tenderness. There was not one trace of sternness; all was softened. The look was what she fancied he might have turned upon her had she lain there dead, ere yet the love of their early and ill-fated union had grown cold in his heart. There was something in it which reminded her of days and feelings, gone never to return. And while she looked in his face with a sweet and mournful fascination, tears unconsciously wet the pillow on which her poor head was resting. Unable to speak, unable to move, she heard him say—

"It was not your fault, Gertrude—it was not yours, nor mine. There is a destiny in these things too strong for us. Past is past—what is done, is done for ever; and even were it all to do over again, what power have I to mend it! No, no; how could I contend against the combined power of passions, circumstances, influences—in a word, of FATE? You have been good and patient, while *I*——but no matter. Your lot, Gertrude, is a happier one than mine."

Mrs. Marston heard him and saw him, but she had not the power, nor even the will, herself to speak or move. He appeared before her passive sense like the phantasm of a dream. He stood up at the bedside, and looked

on her steadfastly, with the same melancholy expression. For a moment he stooped over her, as if about to kiss her face, but checked himself, stood erect again at the bedside, then suddenly turned—the curtain fell back into its place, and she saw him no more.

With a strange mixture of sweet and bitter feelings, this vision rested upon the memory of Mrs. Marston, until, gradually, deep slumber again overcame her senses, and the incident and all its attendant circumstances faded into oblivion.

It was past eight o'clock when Mrs. Marston awoke next morning. The sun was shining richly and cheerily in at the windows; and as the remembrance of Marston's visit to her chamber, and the unwonted manifestations of tenderness and compunction which accompanied it, returned, she felt something like hope and happiness, to which she had long been a stranger, flutter her heart. The pleasing reverie, to which she was yielding, was, however interrupted. The sound of stifled sobbing in the room reached her ear, and, pushing back the bed-curtains, and leaning forward to look, she saw her maid, Willett, sitting with her back to the wall, crying bitterly, and striving, as it seemed, to stifle her sobs with her apron, which was wrapped about her face.

"Willett—Willett, is it *you* who are sobbing? What is the matter with you, child?" said Mrs. Marston, anxiously.

The girl checked herself, dried her eyes hastily, and walking briskly to a little distance, as if engaged in arranging the chamber, she said, with an affectation of carelessness—

"Oh, ma'am, it is nothing—nothing at all, indeed, ma'am."

Mrs. Marston remained silent for a time, while all her vague and agonizing apprehensions returned. Meantime the girl continued to shove the chairs hither and thither, and to arrange and disarrange everything in the room, with a fidgety industry, intended to cover her agitation. A few minutes, however, served to weary her of this; for she abruptly stopped, stood by the bedside, and, looking at her mistress, burst into tears.

"Good God! what is it?" said Mrs. Marston, shocked and even terrified, while new alarms displaced the old ones. "Is Miss Rhoda—can it be—is she—is my darling well?"

"Oh yes, ma'am," answered the maid—"very well, ma'am; she is up, and out walking, and knows nothing of all this."

"All *what*?" urged Mrs. Marston. "Tell me—tell me, Willett, what has happened. What is it? Speak, child—say what it is."

"Oh, ma'am—oh, my poor, dear mistress!" continued the girl, and stopped, almost stifled with sobs.

"Willett, you must speak—you must say what is the matter. I implore of you—I desire you!" urged the distracted lady. Still the girl, having made one or two ineffectual efforts to speak, continued to sob.

"Willett, you will drive me mad. For mercy's sake—for God's sake, speak—tell me what it is!" cried the unhappy lady.

"Oh, ma'am, it is—it is about the master," sobbed the girl.

"Why he can't—he has not—Oh, merciful God! he has not hurt himself!" she almost screamed.

"No, ma'am—no—not *himself*—no—no—but ——" and again she hesitated.

"But *what*? Speak out, Willett—dear Willett, have mercy on me, and speak out," cried her wretched mistress.

"Oh, ma'am, don't be fretted—don't take it to heart, ma'am," said the maid, clasping her hands together in anguish.

"Anything—anything, Willett—only speak at once," she answered.

"Well, ma'am, it is soon said—it is easy told. The master, ma'am—the master is gone with the Frenchwoman; they went in the travelling coach last night, ma'am—he is gone away with her, ma'am—that is all."

Mrs. Marston looked at the girl with a gaze of stupified, stony terror—not a muscle of her face moved—not one heaving respiration showed that she was living. Motionless, with this fearful look fixed upon the girl, and her thin hands stretched towards her, she remained, second after second; at last her outstretched hands began to tremble more and more violently—and as if, for the first time the knowledge of his calamity had reached her—with a cry, unearthly, as though

body and soul were parting, she fell back motionless in her bed.

Several hours had passed before Mrs. Marston was restored to consciousness; to this state of utter insensibility, one of silent, terrified stupor succeeded—and it was not until she saw her daughter Rhoda standing at her bedside, weeping, that she found voice and recollection to speak.

"My child—my darling—my poor child," she cried, sobbing piteously, as she drew her to her heart, and looked in her face alternately—"my darling—my darling child."

Rhoda could only weep, and return her poor mother's caresses in silence. Too young and inexperienced to understand the full extent and nature of this direful calamity—the strange occurrence—the general and apparent consternation of the whole household, and the spectacle of her mother's agony, had filled her with fear, perplexity, and anguish. Scared and stunned with a vague sense of danger, like a young bird, that, for the first time, cowers under a thunder-storm, she nestled in her mother's bosom—there, with a sense of protection, and with a feeling of boundless love and tenderness, she lay, frightened, wondering, and weeping.

Two or three days passed, and Dr. Danvers came and sate for several hours with poor Mrs. Marston. To comfort and console, were, of course, out of his power. The nature of the bereavement—far more terrible than death—its recent occurrence—the distracting consciousness of all its complicated consequences—rendered this a hopeless task. She bowed herself under the blow, with the submission of a broken heart. The hope to which she had clung for years had vanished—the worst that ever her imagination feared, had come in earnest.

One idea was now constantly present in her mind. She felt a sad, but immovable assurance, that she should not live long, and the thought—"What will become of my darling, when I am gone—who will guard and love my child when I am in my grave—whom is she to look to for tenderness and protection then?" perpetually haunted her, and superadded the pangs of a still wilder despair to the desolation of a broken heart.

It was not for more than a week after this event, that, one day, Willett, with a certain air of anxious mystery, entered the silent and darkened chamber where Mrs. Marston lay—she had a letter in her hand—the seal and handwriting were Mr. Marston's. It was long before the injured wife was able to open it—when she did so, the following sentences met her eye:—

"GERTRUDE—You can be ignorant neither of the nature, nor of the consequences of the decisive step I have taken—I do not seek to excuse it. For the censure of the world—its meddling and mouthing hypocrisy—I care absolutely nothing—I have long set *it* at defiance—and you yourself, Gertrude, when you deliberately reconsider the circumstances of estrangement and coldness under which, though beneath the same roof, we have lived for years—without either sympathy or confidence, can scarcely—if at all—regret the rupture of a tie which had long ceased to be anything better than an irksome and galling formality—I do not desire to attribute to you the smallest blame. There was an incompatibility, not of temper, but of feelings, which made us *strangers*, though calling one another man and wife—upon this fact I rest my own justification; our living together under these circumstances was, I dare say, equally undesired by us both. It was, in fact, but a deference to the formal hypocrisy of the world. At all events, the irrevocable act which separates us for ever is done—and I have now merely to state so much of my intentions as may relate in anywise to your future arrangements. I have written to your cousin, and former guardian, Mr. Roe, telling him how matters stand between us. You, I told him, shall have, without opposition from me, the whole of your own fortune to your own separate use, together with whatever shall be mutually agreed upon as reasonable, from my income, for your support, and that of my daughter. It will be necessary to complete your arrangements with expedition, as I purpose returning to Dunoran in about three weeks—and as, of course, a meeting between you and those by whom I shall be accompanied is wholly out of the question, you will see the expediency of losing no time in adjusting everything for your's, and

my daughter's departure. In the details, of course, I shall not interfere. I think I have made myself clearly intelligible, and would recommend your communicating at once with Mr. Roe, with a view to completing temporary arrangements, until your final plans shall have been decided upon.

"RICHARD MARSTON."

The reader can easily conceive the feelings with which this letter was perused. We shall not attempt to describe them; nor shall we weary his patience by a detail of all the circumstances attending Mrs. Marston's departure. Suffice it to mention, that, in less than a fortnight after the receipt of the letter which we have just copied, she had for ever left the mansion of Dunoran.

In a small house, in a sequestered part of the beautiful county of Wicklow, the residence of Mrs. Marston and her daughter was for the present fixed. And there, for a time, the heartbroken and desolate lady enjoyed, at least, the privilege of an immunity from the intrusions of all external troubles. But the blow, under which the feeble remains of her health and strength were gradually to sink, had struck too surely home—and, from month to month—almost from week to week—the progress of decay was perceptible.

Meanwhile, though grieved and humbled, and longing to return to Ireland, to comfort his unhappy mother, Charles Marston, for the present absolutely dependant upon his father, had no choice but to remain at Oxford, and to pursue his studies there.

At Dunoran, Marston and the partner of his guilt continued to live. The old servants were all gradually dismissed, and new ones hired by Mademoiselle de Barras. There they dwelt, shunned by everybody, in a stricter and more desolate seclusion than ever. The novelty of the unrestraint and licence of their new mode of life speedily passed away, and with it the excited and guilty sense of relief, which had for a time produced a false and hollow gaiety. The sense of security prompted in mademoiselle a hundred indulgences, which, in her former precarious position, she would not have dreamed of. Outbreaks of temper, sharp, and sometimes violent, began to manifest themselves on her part—and renewed disappointment, and blacker remorse, to darken the mind of Marston himself. Often, in the dead of night, the servants would overhear their bitter and fierce altercations ringing through the melancholy mansion—and often the reckless use of terrible and mysterious epithets of crime. Their quarrels increased in violence and in frequency—and, before two years had passed, feelings of bitterness, hatred, and dread, alone seemed to subsist between them. Yet, upon Marston she continued to exercise a powerful and mysterious influence. There was a dogged, apathetic submission upon his part, and a growing insolence upon her's, constantly more and more strikingly visible. Neglect, disorder, and decay, too, were more than ever apparent in the dreary air of the place.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LATTER DAYS OF THE HON. RICHARD MARSTON, OF DUNORAN.

PART III.

"When Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death."

Dr. Danvers, save by rumour and conjecture, knew nothing of Marston and his abandoned companion. He had, more than once, felt a strong disposition to visit Dunoran, and expostulate, face to face, with its guilty proprietors. This idea, however, he had, upon consideration, dismissed; not on account of any shrinking from the possible repulses and affronts to which the attempt might subject him—but from a thorough conviction that the endeavour would be utterly fruitless for good, while it might, very obviously, expose him to painful misinterpretation and suspicion—leaving it to be imagined that he had been influenced, if by no meaner motive, at least by the promptings of an idle and prying curiosity, in thus pushing his way within the proscribed precincts of Dunoran.

Meanwhile, he maintained a correspondence with Mrs. Marston, and had even once or twice since her departure visited her, when business had called him to the capital, at her new place of abode. Latterly, however, this correspondence had been a good deal interrupted, and its intervals had been supplied occasionally by Rhoda; whose letters, although she herself appeared unconscious of the mournful event whose approach they too plainly indicated, were painful records of the manifest and rapid progress of mortal decay.

He had just received one of those ominous letters, at the little post-office in the town we have already mentioned, and full of the melancholy news it contained, Dr. Danvers was riding slowly towards his home. As he rode into a lonely road, traversing a hilly tract of some three miles in length, the singularity, it may be, of his costume attracted the eye of another passenger, who was, as it turned out, no other than Marston himself. For two or three miles of this desolate road, their ways happened to lie together. Marston's first impulse was to avoid the clergyman; his second—which he obeyed—was to join company, and ride along with him, at all events, for so long as would show that he shrunk from no encounter which fortune or accident presented. There was a spirit of bitter defiance in this, which cost him a painful effort.

"How do you do, Parson Danvers?" said Marston, touching his hat with the handle of his whip.

Danvers thought he had seldom seen a man so changed in so short a time. His face had grown sullen and wasted, and his figure slightly stooped, with an appearance of feebleness.

"Mr. Marston," said the clergyman, gravely, and with some embarrassment, "it is a long time since you and I have seen one another, and many and painful events have passed in the interval. I scarce know upon what terms we meet. I am prompted to speak to you, and in a tone, perhaps, which you will hardly brook; and yet, if we keep company, as it seems likely we may, I cannot, and I ought not, to be silent."

"Well, Mr. Danvers, I accept the condition—speak what you will," said Marston, gloomily. "If you exceed your privilege, and grow uncivil, I need but use my spurs, and leave you behind me preaching to the winds."

"Ah! Mr. Marston," said Doctor Danvers, almost sadly, after a considerable pause; "when I saw you close beside me, my heart was troubled within me."

"You looked on me as something from the nether world, and expected to see the cloven hoof," said Marston,

bitterly, and raising his booted foot a little as he spoke; "but, after all, I am but a vulgar sinner of flesh and blood, without enough of the preternatural about me to frighten an old nurse, much less to agitate a pillar of the church."

"Mr. Marston, you talk sarcastically; but you *feel* that recent circumstances, as well as old recollections, might well disturb and trouble me at sight of you," answered Dr. Danvers.

"Well—yes—perhaps it is so," said Marston, hastily and sullenly, and became silent for a while.

"My heart is full, Mr. Marston—charged with grief, when I think of the sad history of those with whom, in my mind, you must ever be associated," said Dr. Danvers.

"Ay, to be sure," said Marston, with stern impatience; "but, then, you have much to console you. You have got your comforts and your respectability—all the dearer, too, from the contrast of other peoples' misfortunes and degradations; then you have your religion, moreover ——"

"Yes," interrupted Danvers, earnestly, and hastening to avoid a sneer upon this subject; "God be blessed, I am an humble follower of his gracious Son, our Redeemer; and though, I trust, I should bear with patient submission whatever chastisement in his wisdom and goodness he might see fit to inflict upon me, yet I do praise and bless him for the mercy which has hitherto spared me, and I do feel that mercy all the more profoundly, from the afflictions and troubles with which I daily see others overtaken."

"And in the matter of piety and decorum, doubtless, you bless God also," said Marston, sarcastically, "that you are not as other men are, nor even as this publican."

"Nay, Mr. Marston; God forbid I should harden my sinful heart with the wicked pride of the Pharisee. Evil and corrupt am I already—over much. Too well I know the vileness of my heart, to make myself righteous in my own eyes," replied Dr. Danvers, humbly. "But, sinner as I am, I am yet a messenger of God, whose mission is one of authority to his fellow-sinners; and woe is me if I speak not the truth at all seasons, and in all places, where my words may be profitably heard."

"Well, Doctor Danvers, it seems you think it your duty to speak to me, of course, respecting my conduct and my spiritual state. I shall save you the pain and trouble of opening the subject—I shall state the case for you in two words," said Marston, almost fiercely. "I have put away my wife without just cause, and am living in sin with another woman. Come, what have you to say on this theme? Speak out. Deal with me as roughly as you will, I will hear it, and answer you again."

"Alas, Mr. Marston! and do not these things trouble you?" exclaimed Dr. Danvers, earnestly. "Do they not weigh heavy upon your conscience? Ah, sir, do you not remember that, slowly and surely, you are drawing towards the hour of death, and the day of judgment?"

"The hour of death! Yes, I know it is coming, and I await it with indifference. But, for the day of judgment, with its books and trumpets! my dear doctor, pray don't expect to frighten me with that."

Marston spoke with an angry scorn, which had the effect of interrupting the conversation for some moments.

"Am I to understand, Mr. Marston," asked Dr. Danvers, after a considerable pause, "that you reject revealed religion wholly, or that you confine your scepticism to one point?"

"I reject it wholly," replied Marston, coldly.

"Do you believe even in God the Creator?" urged Dr. Danvers, with a mixture of earnest simplicity and horror.

"Ay, in *a* creator I do believe," answered he, "but not in the creator you have painted. I do *not* say in my heart there is no God; but I say, and believe, there is no such God as you describe and worship. The thing is a mass of contradictions. Take but the first, and most hacknied of the set. You tell me he is infinitely powerful. Well, suppose I assent to that, what do you tell me next? Why, that he is infinitely benevolent, too! Well, what should be the necessary practical result of both these attributes? Why, of course, that his creatures should be happy to the extent of their capabilities

of happiness. And how does this inference square with the common facts of experience? Psha, my dear sir, even in these, your fundamental postulates, appear the weakness and confusion of falsehood."

"You have made the difficulty yourself. You misinterpret terms, and force upon the doctrines of the Bible a meaning they were never intended to bear," answered Doctor Danvers. "God's will asserts itself progressively—by intermediate agencies—by a graduated system of cause and effect; but, in the end, and as respects the purpose to which it tends, irresistibly, omnipotently. Thus, in one sense ——"

"Tut, tut, my good sir, the word 'omnipotence' has but one meaning. But, enough of this," interrupted Marston; "you cannot give me new convictions, or shake my old ones. I thank you, nevertheless, for taking so much trouble, though in vain. In truth, doctor, you find me, in spiritual matters, but a sorry and singularly unpromising subject—what *you* will term an inveterate and dogged infidel, but, as I believe, an unprejudiced man, of plain, common sense, and with a most unaccommodating contempt for cant and mummery of every sort. I have my creed—such as it is. It has served me thus far, and for the brief term I have yet to live, it will do very well."

"Yet, pardon me if I pursue this a moment longer. You acknowledge a benevolent Creator," persisted Dr. Danvers, who, even at the risk of offending his companion, endeavoured to prolong the discussion.

"No, *not* a benevolent one," interrupted Marston, fiercely; "a malignant, or, at best, a reckless one, if you will. Why, look around you; see disease — madness — hunger — hatred. Psha, sir! seeing all these, how dare you insult common sense by calling the creator of them infinitely—that is the word—*infinitely* benevolent. If *you* carried with you everywhere, by day and night, a load of accumulated, and all but unendurable misery, produced by the natural working of the very elements which your Creator himself combined in your character, and of the circumstances among which he, with his own hand, plunged you—if you were such a wretch as *I* am—you would cease to prate of his mercy and his justice. Psha, sir; I despise this snivel, and laugh at your creed, as scornfully as he himself does."

"Mr. Marston, your language shocks as well as grieves me," said Dr. Danvers; "you speak as though you *hated* the light, with a railing and a bitter spirit. May God, in his mercy, soften and illuminate your heart—may He, by the wonderful working whereby He subdueth all things unto himself, even yet subdue your stubborn unbelief, and pour his grace into your heart, that so, at last, your precious soul may be delivered out of the sorrows and anguish which, even now, overwhelm it like a stormy sea."

They rode on, side by side, for a long time, without speaking. At length, however, Marston unexpectedly broke the silence—

"Doctor Danvers," said he, "you asked me some time ago if I feared the hour of death, and the day of judgment. I answered you truly, I do *not* fear them—nay *death*, I think, I could meet with a happier and a quieter heart than any other chance that can befall me; but there are other fears — fears that *do* trouble me much."

Doctor Danvers looked inquiringly at him; but neither spoke for a time.

"You have not seen the catastrophe of the tragedy yet," said Marston, with a stern, stony look, made more horrible by a forced smile, something like a shudder. "I wish I could tell you—*you*, Doctor Danvers—for you are honourable and gentle-hearted. I wish I durst tell you what I fear—the only, *only* thing I really do fear. Oh, God—oh, God! No mortal knows it but myself, and I see it coming upon me with slow, but unconquerable might. Oh, God—dreadful spirit—spare me!"

Again they were silent, and again Marston resumed—

"Doctor Danvers, don't mistake me," he said, turning sharply, and fixing his eyes with a strange expression upon his companion. "I dread nothing *human*—I fear neither death, nor disgrace, nor eternity; I have no secrets to keep—no exposures to apprehend; but I dread—I dread ——"

He paused—scowled darkly, as if stung with pain—turned away, muttering to himself—and gradually became much excited and agitated.

"I can't tell you now, sir, and I won't," he said, abruptly and fiercely, and with a countenance darkened with a wild and appalling rage that was wholly unaccountable. "I see you searching me with your eyes. Suspect what you will, sir, you shan't inveigle me into admissions. Ay, pry—whisper—stare—question, conjecture, sir—I suppose I must endure the world's impertinence, but, d—n me if I gratify it."

They rode on slowly for fully ten minutes in utter silence, except that Marston occasionally muttered to himself, as it seemed, in excited abstraction. Danvers had at first felt naturally offended at the violent and insulting tone in which he had been so unexpectedly and unprovokedly addressed; but this feeling of irritation was but transient, and some fearful suspicions as to Marston's sanity flitted through his mind. In a calmer and more dogged tone, his companion now addressed him—

"There is little profit you see, doctor, in worrying me about your religion," said Marston. "It is but sowing the wind, and reaping the whirlwind; and, to say the truth, the longer you pursue it the less I am in the mood to listen. If ever *you* are cursed and persecuted as I have been, you will understand how little tolerant of gratuitous vexations and contradictions a man may become. We have squabbled over religion long enough, and each holds his own faith still. Continue to sun yourself in your happy delusions, and leave me untroubled to tread the way of my own dark and cheerless destiny."

Thus saying, he made a sullen gesture of farewell, and spurring his horse, crossed the broken fence at the roadside, and so, at a listless pace, through gaps and by farm-roads, penetrated towards his melancholy and guilty home.

It was shortly after this, that a new arrival at Dunoran excited the curiosity of the neighbourhood. A rather good-looking, but over-dressed Frenchman, with a free-and-easy assurance which might have passed him off as the master of the place, on a sudden made his appearance. This foreigner styled himself the Count de Barras, and was rumoured to be the brother of "mademoiselle." With the exception, however, of his tall and somewhat tawdry exterior, and of the very slender information we have just summed up, nothing whatever was known about him; and as he seldom, if ever, stirred beyond the precincts of the demesne, it was conjectured that his necessities, rather than any pleasanter influence, had brought him there; those, moreover, whose opportunities for conjecture were pronounced to be the most favourable, reported that he possessed, on his arrival, no visible endowments beyond a huge appetite and a single change of clothes. Such as he was, however, he became domesticated at Dunoran; and it is scarcely necessary to add, that this new importation was little calculated to add to the respectability and character of the establishment.

Two years had now passed since the decisive event which had for ever separated Marston from her who had loved him so devotedly and so fatally—two years to him of disappointment, abasement, and secret rage; two years to her of gentle and heart-broken submission to the chastening hand of heaven. At the end of this time she died. Marston read the letter that announced the event with a stern look, and silently, but the shock he felt was terrific. No man is so self-abandoned to despair and degradation, that at some casual moment thoughts of amendment—some gleams of hope, however faint and transient, from the distant future—will not visit him. With Marston, those thoughts had somehow ever been associated with vague ideas of a reconciliation with the being whom he had forsaken—good and pure, and looking at her from the darkness and distance of his own fallen state, almost angelic as she seemed. But she was now dead—he could make her no atonement—she could never smile forgiveness upon him. This long-familiar image—the last that had reflected for him one ray of the lost peace and love of happier times, had vanished, and henceforward there was

before him nothing but storm, and darkness, and fear.

Consequent upon this event, however, were certain new arrangements, involving in their issue important results to several of the persons of this tale. Marston's embarrassed fortunes made it to him an object to resume the portion of his income heretofore devoted to the separate maintenance of his wife and daughter. In order to effect this, it became, of course, necessary to recall his daughter Rhoda, and fix her residence once more at Dunoran. No more dreadful penalty could have been inflicted upon the poor girl —no more agonising ordeal than that she was thus doomed to undergo. She had idolised her mother, and now adored her memory. She knew that Mademoiselle de Barras had betrayed and indirectly *murdered* the parent she had so devotedly loved; she knew that that woman had been the curse, the fate of her family, and she regarded her naturally with feelings of mingled terror and abhorrence, the intensity of which was indescribable. To find herself, then, forced to reside with this fearful and revolting woman, to keep her company, to submit perhaps to her government, and daily to witness her usurpation of the place and prerogative of the dear and gentle parent who was gone—could imagination have conceived a more intolerable and heart-rending penance!

The few scattered friends and relatives, whose sympathies had been moved by the melancholy fate of poor Mrs. Marston, and who cared to inquire about the arrangements made for her maintenance, were unanimously agreed that the intended removal of the young and innocent daughter to the polluted mansion of sin and shame, was too intolerably revolting to be permitted. But each of these virtuous individuals unhappily thought it the duty of the *others* to interpose, and felt himself no individual obligation to offer this pure and lovely child of misfortune an asylum from the snares and horrors of the evil scene to which she was now summoned as her home. Everybody's business, as the adage hath it, was in this case nobody's; and with a running commentary of wonder and reprobation, and much virtuous criticism, events were suffered uninterruptedly to take their sinister and melancholy course.

It was about two months after the death of Mrs. Marston, and on a bleak and ominous night at the wintry end of autumn, that poor Rhoda, in deep mourning, and pale with grief and agitation, descended from a chaise at the well-known door of the mansion of Dunoran. Whether from consideration for her feelings, or, as was more probable, from pure indifference, Rhoda was conducted on her arrival direct to her own chamber, and it was not until the next morning that she saw her father. He entered her room unexpectedly; he was very pale, and as she thought, greatly altered, but he seemed perfectly collected and free from agitation. The marked and even shocking change in his appearance, and perhaps even the trifling though painful circumstance that he wore no mourning for the beloved being who was gone, caused her, after a moment's mute gazing in his face, to burst into an irrepressible flood of tears.

Marston waited stoically until the paroxysm had subsided, and then taking her hand, with a look in which a dogged sternness was contending with something like shame, he said—

"There, there; you can weep when I am gone. I shan't say very much to you at present, Rhoda, and only wish you to attend to me for one minute. Listen, Rhoda—the lady whom you have been in the habit (here he slightly averted his eyes) of calling Mademoiselle de Barras, is no longer so; she is married; she is my wife, and consequently you will treat her with the respect due to"—he would have said, "a mother," but could not, and supplied the phrase by adding, "to that relation."

Rhoda was unable to speak, but almost unconsciously bowed her head in token of attention and submission, and her father pressed her hand more kindly, as he continued—

"I have always found you a dutiful and obedient child, Rhoda, and expected no other conduct from you. Mrs. Marston will treat you with proper kindness and consideration, and desires me to say that you can, whenever you please, keep strictly to yourself, and need not, unless you feel so disposed, attend the regular meals of

the family. This privilege may suit your present depressed spirits, especially as Monsieur de Barras, Mrs. Marston's brother, is a stranger to you, and you are aware, of course, that he is our guest at present."

She had *not* known this before, but the intelligence, strange to say, was not unwelcome, inasmuch as any thing or person likely to interfere between her and the dreaded society of her former governess, was to her an unspeakable relief.

After a few words more, Marston withdrew, leaving his daughter to her reflections, and bleak and bitter enough they were.

Some weeks passed away, and perhaps we shall best consult our reader's ease by substituting for the formal precision of narrative, a few extracts from the letters which Rhoda wrote to her brother, still at Cambridge. These will convey her own impressions respecting the scenes and personages among whom she was now to move.

"The house and place are much neglected, and the former in some parts suffered almost to go to decay. The windows broken in the last storm, nearly eight months ago, they tell me, are still unmended, and the roof, too, unrepaired. The pretty garden near the well, among the lime-trees, that our darling mother was so fond of, is all but obliterated with weeds and grass, and since my first visit I have not had heart to go near it again. All the old tenants are gone—new faces everywhere. . . . . .

"I have been obliged several times, through fear of offending my father, to join the party in the drawing-room. You may conceive what I felt at seeing mademoiselle in the place once filled by our dear mamma. I was so choked with sorrow, bitterness, and indignation, and my heart so palpitated, that I could not speak, and I believe they thought I was going to faint. Mademoiselle looked very angry, but my father pretending to show me, heaven knows what, from the window, led me to it, and the air revived me a little. Mademoiselle (for I cannot call her by her new name) is altered a good deal—more, however, in the character than the contour of her face and figure. Certainly, however, she has grown a good deal fuller, and her colour is higher; and whether it is fancy or not, I cannot say, but certainly to me it seems that the expression of her face has acquired something habitually lowering and malicious, and which, I know not how, inspires me with an undefinable dread. She has, however, been tolerably civil to me, but seems contemptuous and rude to my father, and I am afraid he is very wretched. I have seen them exchange such looks, and overheard such intemperate and even appalling altercations between them, as indicate something worse and deeper than ordinary ill-will. This makes me additionally wretched, especially as I cannot help thinking that some mysterious cause enables her to frighten and tyrannise over my poor father. I sometimes think he absolutely detests her; yet, though fiery altercations ensue, he ultimately submits to this bad and cruel woman. Oh, my dear Charles, you have no idea of the shocking, or rather the terrifying reproaches I have heard interchanged between them, as I accidentally passed the room where they were sitting—such terms as have sent me to my room, feeling as if I were in a horrid dream, and make me cry and tremble for hours after I got there. . . . . I see my father very seldom, and when I do, he takes but little notice of me. . . . . Poor Willett, you know, returned with me. She accompanies me in my walks, and is constantly dropping hints about mademoiselle, from which I know not what to gather. . . . . . M. de Barras, mademoiselle's brother, is, in my opinion, a particularly offensive person—vulgar, loud, and almost insultingly familiar. Willett says he has not a penny of money but what he extracts from mademoiselle, and that he has come here to live upon my father, which, indeed, is not unlikely. The first day I saw him, he made a point of staring and ogling in so marked and offensive a way, that I felt at once angry and ashamed, and the more I marked my displeasure and annoyance, the more familiar he became, as if resolved, by some abominable perversity, to construe my very dislike into a species of encouragement. Another day I met him in the hall alone, and he in-

stantly began to grin, and sigh, and jabber love speeches. I did not so much as look back at him, but walked straight on in silence, and trying to appear as unconcerned as if he had not been there. But this kind of rebuke seems thrown away upon him, for he recommenced the same practices no later than yesterday; and when I was leaving the room, with an insufferable affectation of playfulness he ran before me, and stood between me and the door. I was really both incensed and frightened. Whereupon mademoiselle, who just entered at the other door, in a towering passion, attacked him with furious volubility; and, to do him justice, he looked thoroughly cowed. I think, however, she has greatly mistaken my part in the matter, for she has looked very angrily on me ever since. But that is, I need scarcely tell you, to me a matter of very complete indifference. . . .

"I often fear that my father has some secret and mortal ailment. He generally looks ill, and sometimes quite *wretchedly*. He came twice lately to my room, I think to speak to me on some matter of importance; but he said only a sentence or two, and even these broken and incoherent. He seemed unable to command spirits for the interview; and, indeed, he grew so agitated and strange, that I was alarmed, and felt greatly relieved when he left me. . . . . .

"I do not, you see, disguise my feelings, dear Charles. I do not conceal from you the melancholy and anguish of my present situation. How intensely I long for your promised arrival. I have not a creature to whom I can say one word in confidence, except poor Willett; who, though very good-natured, and really dear to me, is yet far from being a companion. I sometimes think my intense anxiety to see you here is almost selfish; for I know you will feel as acutely as I do the terrible change observable everywhere. But I cannot help longing for your return, dear Charles, and counting the days and the very hours till you arrive.

. . . . . .

"Be cautious, in writing to me, not to say anything which you would not wish mademoiselle to see; for Willett tells me that she *knows* that she often examines, and even intercepts the letters that arrive; and, though Willett may be mistaken, and I hope she is, yet it is better that you should be upon your guard. Ever since I heard this, I have brought my letters to the post-office myself, instead of leaving them with the rest upon the hall table; and you know it is a long walk for me.

. . . . . .

"I go to church every Sunday, and take Willett along with me. No one from this seems to think of doing so but ourselves. I see the Mervyns there. Mrs. Mervyn is particularly kind, and Emily grown quite beautiful. The good old lady constantly regrets the 'invincible prejudice,' as she calls it, which would prevent, of course, my father's permitting me to visit them. I know that what she wishes is to offer me an asylum at Newton Park; and you cannot think with how much tenderness and delicacy she conveys the wish. But I dare not hint the subject to my father; and, earnestly as I desire it, I could not but feel that I should go there, not to visit, but to *reside*. And so, even in this, in many respects, delightful project, is mingled the bitter apprehension of dependence—something so humiliating, that, kindly and delicately as the offer is made, I could not bring myself to embrace it. I have a great deal to say to you, and long to see you." . . . . . .

These extracts will enable the reader to form a tolerably accurate idea of the general state of affairs at Dunoran. Some particulars must, however, be added. In writing to her brother, Rhoda greatly understated the real unhappiness and apprehensions involved in her present situation. The impertinent attentions of Monsieur de Barras were not only to her a source of disgust and indignation, but of no small anxiety and alarm. The utter seclusion of the house, buried far among gloomy masses of timber—the desolate extent, and comparative desertion of the mansion itself—her own isolated and defenceless position, friendless and companionless—and, more than all, her consciousness of the degradation and baseness of the characters by whom she was surrounded—all these circumstances filled her mind with melancholy and alarms, vague,

indeed, but incessant, and often almost intolerable.

Marston, meanwhile, continued to be the same gloomy and joyless being as heretofore. Sometimes moody and apathetic—sometimes wayward, and even savage—but never for a moment at ease—never social; an isolated, disdainful, ruined man.

One day as Rhoda sate and read under the shade of some closely interwoven evergreens, in a lonely and sheltered part of the neglected pleasure-grounds, with her honest maid, Willett, in attendance, she was surprised by the sudden appearance of her father, who stood unexpectedly before her. Though his attitude for some time was fixed, his countenance was troubled with a restless anxiety and pain, and his sunken eyes rested upon her with a fiery and fretted gaze. He seemed lost in agitated thought for a while, and then, touching Willett sharply on the shoulder, said abruptly—

"Go. I shall call you when you are wanted. Walk down that alley;" and, as he spoke, he indicated with his walking-cane the course he desired her to take.

When the maid was sufficiently distant to be quite out of hearing, Marston sate down beside Rhoda upon the bench, and took her hand in silence. His grasp was cold, and alternately relaxed and contracted with an agitated uncertainty, while his eyes were fixed upon the ground, and he seemed meditating how to open the conversation. At last, as if suddenly awaking from a fearful reverie, he said—

"You correspond with Charles?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, with the respectful formality prescribed by the usages of the time, "we correspond regularly."

"Ay, ay—and, pray, when did you last hear from him?" he continued.

"About a month since, sir," she replied.

"Ha!—and—and—was there nothing strange—nothing—nothing mystic and menacing in his letter? Come, come, you know what I speak of"—he stopped abruptly, and stared in her face with an agitated gaze.

"No, indeed, sir; there was not anything of the kind," she replied.

"I have been greatly shocked—I may say incensed," said Marston, excitedly, "by a passage in his last letter to me. Not that it says anything specific; but—but it amazes me; it enrages me."

He again checked himself, and Rhoda, much surprised, and even shocked, said, stammeringly—

"I am sure, sir, that dear Charles would not intentionally say or do anything that could offend you."

"Ah! as to that, I believe so, too. But it is not with *him* I am indignant—no, no. Poor Charles, I believe, he *is*, as you say, disposed to conduct himself as a son ought to do—respectfully and obediently. Yes, yes—Charles is very well; but I fear he is leading a bad life, notwithstanding—a very bad life: he is becoming subject to *influences* which never visit or torment the good—believe me he is."

Marston shook his head, and muttered to himself, with a look of almost craven anxiety, and then whispered to his daughter—

"Just read this, and then tell me is it not so. Read it—read it—and pronounce."

As he thus spoke, he placed in her hand the letter of which he had spoken, and with the passage to which he invited her attention folded down. It was to the following effect:—

"I cannot tell you how shocked I have been by a piece of information conveyed to me in an anonymous letter, and which is of so very delicate a nature that without your special command I should hesitate to pain you by its recital. I trust it may be utterly false; it nevertheless suggests inquiry. It is enough to say that it is of a very horrible nature, and affects the lady (Mademoiselle de Barras) whom you have recently honoured with your hand."

"*Now* you see," cried Marston, with a shuddering fierceness, as she returned the letter with a blanched cheek and trembling hand—"now you see it all. Are you stupid?—the stamp of the cloven hoof—eh?"

Rhoda, unable to gather his meaning, but, at the same time, with a heart full and trembling, stammered a few frightened words, and became silent.

"It is *he*, I tell you, that does it all;

and if Charles were not living an evil life, he could not have spread his nets for him," said Marston, vehemently. "He can't go near anything good; but, like a scoundrel, he knows where to find a congenial nature, and when he does, he has skill enough to practise upon it. I know him well, and his arts and his smiles—ay, and his scowls and his grins, too. He goes, like his master, up and down, and to and fro upon the earth, for ceaseless mischief. There is not a friend of mine he can get hold of, but he whispers in his ear some damned slander of me. He is drawing them all into a common understanding against me; and he takes an actual pleasure in telling me how the thing goes on—how, one after the other, he has converted my friends into conspirators and libellers, to blast my character, and take my life, and now the monster essays to lure my children into the hellish confederation."

"Who is he, father—who is he?" faltered Rhoda.

"You never saw him," retorted Marston, sternly. "No, no; you can't have seen him, and you probably never will; but if he *does* come here again, don't listen to him—he is half-fiend and half-idiot, and no good comes of his mouthing and muttering. Avoid him, I warn you—avoid him. Let me see—how shall I describe him?—let me see. You remember—you remember Berkley, Sir Wynston Berkley—well, he greatly resembles that dead villain; he has all the same grins, and shrugs, and monkey airs, and his face and figure are like. But *he* is a grimed, ragged, waisted piece of sin, little better than a beggar—a shrunken, malignant libel on the human shape. Avoid him, I tell you—avoid him; he is steeped in lies and poison, like the very serpent that betrayed us. Beware of him, I say; for if he once gains your ear, he will delude you, spite of all your vigilance; he will make you his accomplice—and thenceforth inevitably there is nothing but mortal and implacable hatred between us!"

Frightened at this wild language, Rhoda did not answer, but looked up in his face in silence. A fearful transformation was there—a scowl so livid and maniacal, that her very senses seemed leaving her with terror. Perhaps the sudden alteration observable in her countenance, as this spectacle of hideous menace so unexpectedly encountered her, recalled him to himself; for he added hurriedly, and in a tone of gentler meaning—

"Rhoda, Rhoda, watch and pray. My daughter, my child! keep your heart pure, and nothing bad can approach you for ill. No, no; you are good, and the good need not fear!"

Suddenly Marston burst into tears, as he ended this sentence, and wept long and convulsively. She did not dare to speak, or even to move; but after a while he ceased, appeared uneasy, half ashamed and half angry; and looking with a horrified and bewildered glance into her face, he said—

"Rhoda, child, what—what have I said? My God! what have I been saying? Did I—*do* I look ill? Oh, Rhoda, Rhoda, may you never feel this!"

He turned away from her without awaiting her answer, and walked away with the appearance of intense agitation, as if to leave her. He turned again, however, and with a face pallid and sunken as death, approached her slowly—

"Rhoda," said he, "don't tell what I have said to any one—don't, I conjure you, even to Charles. I speak too much at random, and say more than I mean—a foolish, rambling habit—so do not repeat one word of it—not one word to any living mortal. You and I, Rhoda, must have our little secrets."

He ended with an attempt at a smile, so obviously painful and fear-stricken, that as he walked hurriedly away, the astounded girl burst into a bitter flood of tears. What was—what could be the meaning of the shocking scene she had then been forced to witness? She dared not answer the question. Yet one ghastly doubt haunted her like her shadow—a terrific suspicion, that the malign and hideous light of madness was already glaring upon his mind. As leaning upon the arm of her astonished attendant, she retraced her steps, the trees, the flowers, the familiar hall-door, the echoing passages—every

object that met her eye, seemed strange and unsubstantial, and she gliding on among them in a horrid dream.

Time passed on: there was no renewal of the painful scene which dwelt so sensibly in the affrighted imagination of Rhoda. Marston's manner was changed towards her; he seemed shy, cowed, and uneasy in her presence, and thenceforth she saw less than ever of him. Meanwhile the time approached which was to witness the long-expected, and, by Rhoda, the intensely prayed for arrival of her brother.

Some four or five days before this event, Mr. Marston having, as he said, some business in Dublin, and further designing to meet his son there, took his departure from Dunoran, leaving poor Rhoda to the guardianship of her guilty stepmother, and the persecutions of the coarse and insolent Frenchman, who, with a free-and-easy audacity, had established himself as one of the family; and although she had seen so little of her father, yet the very consciousness of his presence had given her a certain confidence, and sense of security, which vanished at the moment of his departure. Fear-stricken and wretched as he had been, his removal, nevertheless, seemed to her to render the lonely and inauspicious mansion still more desolate and ominous than before.

This vague feeling of apprehension and melancholy foreshadowed the painful realities which were to follow. Strangely enough, the departure of Mr. Marston was apparently as much felt, though in a different way, by Monsieur de Barras, as by the unhappy and unsophisticated girl, who so justly disliked and feared him. His loathed attentions became more and more pushing and audacious, and at the same time, from some mysterious reason, the new mistress of the house regarded her with a countenance more threatening and malignant than heretofore. She had, with a vague and instinctive antipathy, avoided all contact and intercourse with Mrs. Marston, or as, for distinctness sake, we shall continue to call her, "Mademoiselle," since her return; and she on her part had appeared to acquiesce with a sort of scornful nonchalance, in the tacit understanding that she and her former pupil should see and hear as little as might be of one another. With these angry and suspicious glances, however, to which we have alluded, there supervened a galling disposition to throw out sarcastic hints, and bitter, though mysterious insinuations, which insulted and alarmed the innocent girl, and deepened and confirmed the intense abhorrence with which she had habitually shrunk from all intercourse with her.

Meanwhile poor Willett, with her good-natured honesty and her inexhaustible gossip, endeavoured to amuse and re-assure her young mistress, and sometimes even with some partial success. One day, as she assisted her to dress, her prattle accidentally turned upon a subject of some little interest.

"That mounseer is a queer sort of a man, miss—a queer sort of a *gentleman*, so he is. Don't you think so yourself, miss?" asked the maid.

"I have not had many opportunities of judging, Willett: but I confess that I have not seen much to admire in him," answered the young lady, who freely admitted the confidential privilege assumed by her attached attendant.

"I tell you what it is, Miss Rhoda, there is something I don't like going on between him and 'Madam the governess.' I think the two of them is hatching some mischief," pursued the maid; "they are always grumbling and muttering at one another, as if both was finding fault, and both blaming the other; and the minute any one goes into the room, they pretend to be talking quite quiet and natural; and then they will be hugger-muggering and whispering together quite friendly after it all, for an hour and more; and then they look so queer if I happen to come in of a sudden; and when they walk out together, you'll see them talking and talking away as fast, and never a smile on their faces, but looking round them now and then, like as if they were afraid some one might be listening to them, and then walking on another bit, and stopping with the eagerness of talking to one another, and standing stock-still for five minutes together."

"Well, and what of all that, Willett?" inquired Rhoda.

"What!—why it looks very like

plotting, that is all, miss; *plotting*, I say, and—and ——; but no matter, I can't talk of that yet; but I think I'll find out something before long about them, that will open the eyes of *some* people—that is all; but no matter, all in good time," replied Willett.

Rhoda looked inquisitively at her, and the maid, in pity to the curiosity she had excited, added, after a time, in a somewhat frightened whisper—

"I am nearly sure of one thing, miss, between them they have made a pretty fool of the master. Wait a while, miss, and I will be able to tell you more. There will be terrible work about it yet, and that you'll find, miss; but I cannot tell you more for a while."

Rhoda found little, it may be imagined, in these and similar hints and surmises, to calm the uneasy sensations awakened by her own lonely and defenceless position. She avoided, of course, as far as it was possible, any likelihood of meeting the impudent foreigner; and justly as she abhorred the society of her former governess, it was nevertheless with no small satisfaction that she remarked, as it seemed, a studious anxiety on her part, to prevent his ever succeeding in procuring a *tête-à-tête* with her.

Their combined management, however, failed occasionally of its purpose. Monsieur de Barras was vigilant and audacious, and never missed an opportunity of securing a private interview, even though but a momentary one. It happened one evening that Rhoda was writing in the room which had formerly been the scene of her studies under the direction of Mademoiselle de Barras, and which was now her accustomed sitting-room. While she occupied this chamber, however, she always observed the precaution of keeping her maid Willett in the room. Upon this occasion she had been, as usual, in attendance, quietly pursuing her work at an humble distance, while her young mistress was writing. It was now, however, considerably past the hour at which the other inmates of the house usually retired to rest, and relying upon this circumstance, in the full confidence of the impossibility of being disturbed, she despatched her attendant for a book to her own apartment. Willett departed, and her mistress remained alone.

The door, which the maid had closed at her departure, had not been two minutes shut, when it was re-opened, not by Willett, but, to the young lady's consternation, by Monsieur de Barras. Redolent of tobacco-smoke, his face flushed, and his eyes brilliant with wine, he swaggered into the apartment, swinging the door fast behind him as he did so, and, with a libertine smile, far more alarming than the most unequivocal menace, approached her—

"Sir—Monsieur de Barras"—stammered she, rising and advancing with a mingled emotion of anger and fear—"this is my apartment; you have made a mistake."

"A mistake!" he answered, in his own language. "By my faith, no such thing, pretty little ingrate; but quite the reverse. Now what do you wager there is not another creature living who would term so judicious and agreeable a manœuvre by so unworthy a name? No, no; impudent and wicked, *very* wicked, it may be—ha, ha—but faith the thing is no *mistake*."

"Monsieur de Barras, I really request—I must insist"—she began, retreating involuntarily a step or two, and growing every moment more and more angry and alarmed.

"Ay, ay—to be sure you must," he retorted, with an odious grin and a leer. "Request and insist, and insist and request—helas! what a deal of fuss and flutter these timid little birds make when one has netted them."

"I do not know, sir, what you mean—by what right—on what pretence you presume," she again began, with irrepressible indignation.

"There, there—gently—gently, gently," cried the imperturbable rascal, with a coaxing leer, as he approached her still more nearly. "Why, little rogue, what on earth are you afraid of? Am I so devilish ugly, or ill-shaped? Nonsense, child—nonsense. Come, you must not, you won't be so ill-natured."

"Monsieur de Barras, you really must leave this room," she said, in a tone more deprecatory, as her alarm increased. "If you won't go, *I* must—indeed I must, sir ——"

"Bah! child—no such thing," he replied, roughly. "I am not such a

dangerous fellow, I assure you—not I. Can't a man admire a pretty girl, without meaning her a mischief, eh?"

"I—really, monsieur—pray—I entreat of you, sir ——"

"You are a pretty little rogue, and you know it," said he, relapsing into his original strain of languishing playfulness, and drawing near, with his arms extended, to prevent the possibility of her escaping.

"Sir," said she, dreading to show how really terrified she was, "this is insolence—unmanly—insufferable. Let me pass, sir—let me pass. You are no gentleman, sir, or you could not commit so gross a rudeness."

His countenance darkened perceptibly, and for the first time something of undisguised menace appeared in his manner and aspect.

"Come, come—no nonsense—what the devil rudeness do you speak of?" said he. "*Damme!* am I threatening you, pray, that you talk at this rate? I really don't understand you, Miss Rhoda."

As he said this, he sat down carelessly upon the table, keeping his eyes fixed upon her, until gradually the sterner expression which his countenance had just worn melted away once more into the confident and languishing leer with which he had first alarmed her.

"My faith!—you spoil my rest, Miss Rhoda," he resumed, with a theatrical sigh, and an odious smile. "On the honour of a gentleman, I lie awake half the night, tumbling and tossing in a fever; and then, what dreams! Come, shall I tell you my dreams?"

To her infinite delight, Rhoda at this moment heard a step traversing the passage.

"Willett! Willett!" she called, as loudly as she could.

"What are you crying about? who is harming you, you little fool; and how do you know that I will let her in?" cried De Barras, jumping briskly on the floor.

He was anticipated, however; for the door was opened before he could reach it, and not Willett, but Mrs. Marston, or, as we shall continue to call her, "mademoiselle," entered the room. Her beautiful and expressive face was pale as marble, and its whiteness, which extended even to the lips, was enhanced by the brilliant hues of the night-dress she wore—a loose robe of crimson cashmere, trimmed richly with fur, and gathered at the waist with careless grace by a silken cord. One or two clustering locks of her long dark hair hung in waving disorder upon her throat and shoulders. She was evidently inspired by some powerful and vindictive emotion, for her dark eyes seemed to stream actual fire as she glanced from De Barras to Rhoda, and from Rhoda again to him—her lips were closed, her nostrils dilated, and her bosom heaving. It was the form of beauty, exquisite and voluptuous, but tenanted by a spirit from the abyss of unearthly wrath and woe. For a moment her glance became fixed upon Monsieur de Barras—her frown darkened, and a faint smile lighted her countenance with a character that was almost deadly; she looked like a Nemesis, in the very execution of her fearful mission.

"Oh, mademoiselle!—oh, madam! I am glad you have come," stammered poor Rhoda, who, despite the evident wrath and perturbation of the intruder, was relieved unspeakably by her arrival. Monsieur de Barras looked embarrassed and angry, returned twice or thrice the flaming glance of the French lady, and, affecting to laugh, tossed his head, shrugged his shoulders, and, turning on his heel, took a turn up and down the room whistling; and then, turning abruptly, asked in a sharp and angry tone—

"Well; what is the matter now? what is all this about, eh?"

She made no other reply, but by raising her long taper hand, and making a gesture which expressed both grief and menace.

"Eh, tongue-tied—dumb, is she?" he said, wagging his head angrily. "You are a ——. No matter. Why the d— don't you stay in your room?"

"Go to your chamber, Rhoda—go," she said, in a low, resolute tone—little higher, indeed, than a whisper, but all the sterner on that account.

Rhoda glided almost mechanically from the room; and as she hurried noiselessly to her chamber, she still saw before her in imagination the pale, implacable apparition of vengeful

beauty, that had so unexpectedly presented itself.

"Well, Alphonse!" said mademoiselle, drawing a long breath through her pearly teeth, now slightly disclosed by a strange, fixed smile—"what have you now to say?"

It is needless, of course, to mention that this conversation was conducted in French.

"What have I to say! come, who made you judge and executioner here?" he retorted, sullenly.

"Yes, yes, I see it all—your vows of reformation and penitence. Ah, yes, you meditate this second blow, Alphonse—and what am I to call you—what, but a villain," she answered, in an icy tone.

"And, if it comes to calling names, my dear, pray which of us is likely to fare the worst?" he retorted, with a sarcastic chuckle.

"You are a traitor, Alphonse, and mean to drive me to frenzy—to make me ruin us both," she answered.

"Not us both, if you please—say *yourself*, my dear!" he retorted.

"Yes—us *both*—I repeat; for *your* life depends on the continuance of all this, as well as mine. Yes, coward, you live upon my successes, and upbraid me with them after."

Monsieur de Barras made no answer to this home taunt, but by clenching his fist, which he shook with ruffianly menace—while, through his set teeth, he hissed at her those vilest indignities of vituperation, against which, even in its lost, most utterly debased, and forlorn condition, the outraged nature of fallen woman rises up in the agony—albeit, in the helplessness of despair.

She looked at him silently for a moment, with a gaze of stunned bewilderment—and then, with a short cry, she seized the massive candlestick that stood by, with the intent of hurling it at his head. Even, as she made this gesture, however, her spirit changed. She cast it back from her, upon the ground, and clasping her hands over her face, cried in a tone of genuine agony—

"Oh, Alphonse! Alphonse! and this from you—from you—from you!"

"Well, well—don't be a fool, I tell you," he replied, after a sulky silence, "If you don't like what I say—why the —— do you provoke me to it—what harm was I doing—what was the good of all this noise and fury?"

"Oh, Alphonse, to think that you—*you* would have said it—you, who were the cause of all—you, who sent me, forsaken, despairing, and alone, into the storms and temptations of the world. You, Alphonse, from whom I have hidden nothing—to whom I confessed all—to whom I forgave all—for your sake, I have borne terrible years, and endured this last extremity of wretchedness—and do you, after all, upbraid me!"

Upon this scene of remonstrance and recrimination we here suffer the curtain to fall.

* * * * * * *

We must now follow Mr. Marston in his solitary expedition to Dublin. When he took his place in the stage-coach, he had the whole interior of the vehicle to himself—and thus continued to be its solitary occupant for several miles. The coach, however, was eventually hailed, brought to, and the door being opened, Dr. Danvers got in, and took his place opposite to the passenger already established there. The worthy man was so busied in directing the disposition of his luggage, from the window, and in arranging the sundry small parcels with which he was charged, that he did not recognise his companion until they were in motion. When he did so, it was with no very pleasurable feeling—and it is probable that Marston, too, would have gladly escaped the coincidence which thus reduced them once more to the temporary necessity of a *tête-à-tête*. Embarrassing as each felt the situation to be, there was, however, no avoiding it, and after a recognition, and a few forced attempts at conversation, they became, by mutual consent, silent and uncommunicative.

The journey, though in point of space a mere trifle, was, in those slow coach days, a matter of fully five hours' duration—and before it was completed the sun had set, and darkness began to close. Whether it was that the descending twilight dispelled the painful constraint under which Marston had seemed to labour, or that some more purely spiritual and genial influence had gradually dissipated the repulsion and distrust with which, at first, he had shrunk from

a renewal of intercourse with Dr. Danvers, he suddenly accosted him thus:—

"Doctor Danvers," said he, "I have been fifty times on the point of speaking to you—confidentially, of course—while sitting here opposite to you—what I believe I could scarcely bring myself to hint to any other man living—yet, I must tell it, and soon too—and I fear it will have told itself."

Dr. Danvers intimated his readiness to hear and advise, if desired—and Marston resumed abruptly, after a pause—

"Pray, Doctor Danvers, have you heard any stories of an odd kind—any surmises—I don't mean of a *moral* sort—for *those* I hold very cheap—to my prejudice? Indeed, I should hardly say to my *prejudice*—I mean, I ought to say—in short, have you heard people remark upon any fancied eccentricities—or that sort of thing—about me?"

He put the question with obvious difficulty, and at last seemed to overcome his own reluctance with a sort of angry and excited self-contempt and impatience. Doctor Danvers was a little puzzled by the interrogatory, and admitted, in reply, that he did not comprehend its drift.

"Doctor Danvers," he resumed, sternly and dejectedly, "I told you, in the chance interview we had some months ago, that I was haunted by a certain fear—I did not define it—nor, do I think you suspect its nature—it is a fear of nothing mortal—but a ghastly terror of the immortal tenant of this body—my *mind*, sir, is beginning to play me strange tricks—my guide mocks and terrifies me."

There was a perceptible tinge of horror in the look of astonishment with which Dr. Danvers listened.

"You are a gentleman, sir, and a Christian clergyman—what I have said, and shall say, is confided to your honour—to be held sacred as the confession of misery, and hidden from the coarse gaze of the world—I have become subject to a hideous delusion—it comes at intervals—I do not think any mortal suspects it, except, maybe, my daughter Rhoda—it comes and disappears—and comes again—I kept my pleasant secret for a long time, but at last I let it slip, and committed myself, fortunately, to but one person, and that my daughter—and, even so, I hardly think she understood me—I recollected myself before I had disclosed the grotesque and infernal chimera that haunts me."

Marston paused—he was stooped forward, and looking upon the floor of the vehicle, so that his companion could not see his countenance—a silence ensued, which was interrupted by Marston, who once more resumed—

"Sir," said he, "I know not *why*, but I *have* longed—intensely longed—for some trustworthy ear, into which to pour this horrid secret—*why*, I repeat, I cannot tell—for I expect no sympathy, and hate compassion. It is, I suppose, the restless nature of the devil that is in me—but, be it what it may, I will speak to you—but to *you* only—for the present, at least, to you alone."

Doctor Danvers again assured him that he might repose the most entire confidence in his secrecy.

"The human mind, I take it, must have either comfort in the past, or hope in the future," he continued, "otherwise, it is *in danger*; to me, sir, the past is intolerably repulsive—one boundless, barren, and hideous golgotha of dead hopes and murdered opportunities—the future, still blacker and more furious, peopled with dreadful features of horror and menace, and losing itself in utter darkness. Sir, I do not exaggerate—between such a past, and such a future, I stand upon this miserable present—and the only comfort I still am capable of feeling, is that no human being pities me—that I stand aloof from the insults of compassion, and the hypocrisies of sympathetic morality—and that I can safely defy all the respectable scoundrels in Christendom to enhance, by one feather's weight, the load which I myself have accumulated, and which I myself hourly and unaided sustain."

Doctor Danvers here introduced a word or two in the direction of their former conversation.

"No, sir, there is no comfort from that quarter either," said Marston, bitterly, "you but cast your seeds, as the parable terms your teaching, upon the barren sea, in wasting them on me. My fate, be it what it may, is as

irrevocably fixed as though I were dead and judged a hundred years ago."

"This cursed dream," he resumed, abruptly, "that every day enslaves me more and more, has reference to that—that *occurrence* about Wynston Berkley—he is the hero of the hellish illusion. At certain times, sir, it seems to me, as if he, though dead, were still invested with a sort of spurious life—going about unrecognised, except by me, in squalor and contempt—and whispering away, with thrilling slanders, my fame and life—labouring with the malignant industry of a fiend, to involve me in the meshes of that special perdition, from which alone I shrink, and to which this emissary of hell seems to have predestined me. Sir, this is a monstrous and hideous extravagance—a delusion—but, after all, no more than a trick of the *imagination*—the reason, the judgment, is untouched—I cannot choose but *see* all the damned phantasmagoria—but I do not believe it real—and this is the difference between my case—and—and—*madness*."

They were now entering the suburbs of Dublin—and Dr. Danvers, pained and shocked beyond measure by this unlooked-for disclosure, and not knowing what remark or comfort to offer, relieved his temporary embarrassment by looking from the window, as though attracted by the flash of the lamps—among which the vehicle was now moving. Marston, however, laid his hand upon his arm, and thus recalled him, for a moment, to a forced attention.

"It must seem strange to you, Doctor, that I should trust this cursed secret to your keeping," he said—"and, truth to say, it seems so to myself—I cannot account for the impulse, the irresistible power of which has forced me to disclose the hateful mystery to you—but the fact is this—beginning like a speck—this one idea has gradually darkened and dilated, until it has filled my entire mind—the solitary consciousness of the gigantic mastery it has established there, had grown intolerable—I must have told it—the sense of solitude under this aggressive and tremendous delusion, was agony, hourly death to my soul—that is the secret of my talkativeness—my sole excuse for plaguing you with the dreams of a wretched hypochondriac."

Dr. Danvers assured him that no apologies were needed, and was only restrained from adding the expression of that pity which he really felt, by the fear of irritating a temper so full of bitterness, pride, and defiance. A few minutes more, and the coach having reached its destination, they bid one another farewell, and parted.

* * * * * * *

At that time there resided in a decent mansion, in one of the northern suburbs of Dublin, a dapper little gentleman whom we shall call Dr. Parkes. This gentleman was the proprietor and sole professional manager of a private asylum for the insane, and enjoyed a high reputation, and a proportionate amount of business, in his melancholy calling. It was about the second day after the conversation we have just sketched, that this little gentleman having visited, according to his custom, all his domestic patients, was about to take his accustomed walk in his somewhat restricted pleasure-grounds, when his servant announced a visitor.

"A gentleman," he repeated; "you have seen him before—eh?"

"No, sir," replied the man; "he is in the study, sir."

"Ha!—a *professional* call. Well, we shall see."

So saying, the little gentleman summoned his gravest look, and hastened to the chamber of audience.

On entering he found a man dressed well, but gravely, having in his air and manner something of high-breeding. In countenance striking, dark-featured, and stern, furrowed with the lines of pain or thought, rather than of age, although his dark hairs were largely mingled with white.

The physician bowed, and requested the stranger to take a chair; he, however, nodded slightly and impatiently, as if to intimate an intolerance of ceremony, and, advancing a step or two, said abruptly—

"My name, sir, is Marston; I have come to give you a patient."

The doctor bowed with a still deeper inclination, and paused for a continuance of the communication thus auspiciously commenced.

"You are Dr. Parkes, I take it for granted," said Marston, in the same tone.

"Your most obedient, humble servant, sir," replied he, with the polite formality of the day, and another grave bow.

"Doctor," demanded Marston, fixing his eye upon him sternly, and significantly tapping his own forehead, "can you stay execution?"

The physician looked puzzled, hesitated, and at last requested his visitor to be more explicit.

"Can you," said Marston, with the same slow and stern articulation, and after a considerable pause—"can you *prevent* the malady you profess to cure?—can you meet and defeat the enemy half way?—can you scare away the spirit of madness *before* it takes actual possession, and while it is still only hovering about its threatened victim?"

"Sir," he replied, "in certain cases—in very many, indeed—the enemy, as you well call it, *may* thus be met, and effectually worsted at a distance. Timely interposition, in ninety cases out of a hundred, is *everything*; and, I assure you, I hear your questions with much pleasure, inasmuch as I assume it to have reference to the case of the patient about whom you desire to consult me; and who is, therefore, I hope, as yet merely *menaced* with the misfortune from which you would save him."

"I, myself, am that patient, sir," said Marston, with an effort; "your surmise is right. I am not mad, but unequivocally and awfully menaced with madness; it is not to be mistaken. Sir, there is no misunderstanding the tremendous and intolerable signs that glare upon my mind."

"And pray, sir, have you consulted your friends or your family upon the course best to be pursued?" inquired Dr. Parkes, with grave interest.

"No, sir," he answered sharply and almost fiercely; "I have no fancy to make myself the subject of a writ *de lunatico inquirendo*; I don't want to lose my liberty and my property at a blow. The course I mean to take has been advised by no one but myself—is *known* to no other. I now disclose it, and the causes of it, to you, a gentleman, and my professional adviser, in the expectation that you will guard with the strictest secrecy my spontaneous revelations—this you promise me?"

"Certainly, Mr. Marston; I have neither the disposition nor the right to withhold such a promise," answered the physician.

"Well, then, I will first tell you the arrangement I purpose, with your permission, to make, and then I shall answer all your questions respecting my own case," resumed Marston, gloomily. "I wish to place myself under your care, to live under your roof, reserving my full liberty of action. I must be free to come and to go as I will; and on the other hand, I undertake that you shall find me an amenable and docile patient enough. In addition, I stipulate that there shall be no attempt whatever made to communicate with those who are connected with me: these terms agreed upon, I place myself in your hands. You will find in me, as I said before, a deferential patient, and I trust not a troublesome one. I hope you will excuse my adding, that I shall myself pay the charge of my sojourn here from week to week, in advance."

The proposed arrangement was a strange one; and although Dr. Parkes dimly foresaw some of the embarrassments which might possibly arise from his accepting it, there was yet so much that was reasonable as well as advantageous in the proposal, that he could not bring himself to decline it.

The preliminary arrangement concluded, Dr. Parkes proceeded to his more strictly professional investigation. It is, of course, needless to recapitulate the details of Marston's tormenting fancies, with which the reader has indeed been already sufficiently acquainted. Dr. Parkes, having attentively listened to the narrative, and satisfied himself as to the physical health of his patient, was still sorely puzzled as to the probable issue of the awful struggle already but too obviously commenced between the mind and its destroyer in the strange case before him. One satisfactory symptom unquestionably was, the as yet transitory nature of the delusion, and the evident and energetic tenacity with which reason contended for her vital ascendancy. It was a case, however, which for many reasons sorely perplexed him, but of which, notwithstanding, he was disposed, whether

rightly or wrongly the reader will speedily see, to take by no means a decidedly gloomy view.

Having disburthened his mind of this horrible secret, Marston felt for a time a sense of relief amounting almost to elation. With far less of apprehension and dismay than he had done so for months before, he that night repaired to his bedroom. There was nothing in his case, Dr. Parkes believed, to warrant his keeping any watch upon Marston's actions, and accordingly he bid him good-night, in the full confidence of meeting him, if not better, at least not worse, on the ensuing morning.

He miscalculated, however. Marston had probably himself been conscious of some coming crisis in his hideous malady, when he took the decisive step of placing himself under the care of Dr. Parkes. Certain it is, that upon that very night the disease broke forth in a new and appalling development. Dr. Parkes, whose bedroom was next to that occupied by Marston, was awakened in the dead of the night by a howling, more like that of a beast than a human voice, and which gradually swelled into an absolute yell; then came some horrid laughter and entreaties, thick and frantic; then again the same unearthly howl. The practised ear of Dr. Parkes recognised but too surely the terrific import of those sounds. Springing from his bed, and seizing the candle which always burned in his chamber, in anticipation of such sudden and fearful emergencies, he hurried with a palpitating heart, and spite of his long habituation to such scenes as he expected, with a certain sense of horror, to the chamber of his aristocratic patient.

Late as it was, Marston had not yet gone to bed; his candle was still burning, and he himself, half dressed, stood in the centre of the floor, his sword grasped in his hand, all shaking, and livid with terror and rage—and his eyes burning with the preterhuman fires of insanity. As Doctor Parkes entered the chamber, another shout, or rather yell, thundered from the lips of this demoniac effigy; and the mad-doctor stood freezing with horror in the doorway, and yet exerting what remained to him of presence of mind, in the vain endeavour, in the flaring light of the candle, to catch and fix with his own practised eye the terrific gaze of the maniac. Second after second, and minute after minute, he stood confronting this frightful slave of Satan, in the momentary expectation that he would close with and destroy him. On a sudden, however, this brief agony of suspense was terminated—a change like an awaking consciousness of realities, or rather like the withdrawal of some hideous and visible influence from within, passed over the tense and darkened features of the wretched being—a look of horrified perplexity, doubt, and inquiry, he turned from object to object, and at last said, in a subdued and sullen tone, to Dr. Parkes—

"Who are you, sir? What do you want here? Who are you, sir, I say?"

"Who am I? Why, your physician, sir—Doctor Parkes, sir—the owner of this house, sir," replied he, with all the sternness he could command, and yet white as a spectre with agitation. "For shame, sir—for shame—to give way thus. What do you mean by creating this causeless alarm, and disturbing the whole household at so unseasonable an hour? For shame, sir—go to your bed; undress yourself this moment—for shame."

Doctor Parkes, as he spoke, was reassured by the arrival of one of his servants, alarmed by the unmistakable sounds of violent frenzy; he signed, however, to the man not to enter, feeling confident, as he did, that the paroxysm had spent itself.

"Ay, ay," muttered Marston, looking almost sheepishly; "Dr. Parkes, to be sure. What was I thinking of; how cursedly absurd! And *this*," he continued, glancing at his sword, which he threw impatiently upon a sofa as he spoke. "Folly—nonsense! A false alarm, as you say, Doctor. I beg your pardon."

"As Marston spoke, he proceeded with much agitation slowly to undress himself. He had, however, but commenced the process, when, turning abruptly to Doctor Parkes, he said, with a countenance of horror, and in a whisper—

"By ——, doctor, it has been upon me worse than ever. I would have sworn I had the villain with me for hours—*hours*, sir—torturing me with

his damned sneering threats; till, by ——, I could stand it no longer, and took my sword. Oh, doctor, doctor—my God, my God—can't you save me; can nothing be done for me?"

Pale, covered with the dews of horror, he uttered these last words in accents of such imploring despair, as might have borne across the dreadful gulph the prayer of Dives for that one drop of water which was never to cool his burning tongue.

* * * * * * *

Upon the night on which we last saw the guilty and unhappy household of Dunoran, the interview which we described being concluded, Eugenie returned to her solitude, leaving Monsieur de Barras in a somewhat inflamed temper, to the solitary enjoyment of his moody and unprofitable meditations. He was much too angry and too excited to think of sleep. He sate, for fully half-an-hour, muttering, with folded arms and a flushed and defiant countenance. He then got up, and having repaired to his own private apartment, there regaled himself with tobacco and brandy, until his uncomfortable feelings gave place to a happier train of dreamy reverie. There, with cravat removed and vest unbuttoned, we leave him, quaffing his favourite nectar, and wreathed in his narcotic clouds, in all the majestic luxury of a newly-translated demigod.

Rhoda had retired to her own room, accompanied by her faithful maid, Willet. There in the darkened chamber, lying in her sleepless bed, and longing for day, she might easily have counted the deep respirations of her profoundly unconscious attendant, sleeping soundly in the same apartment, and the loud throbbing of her own fluttered heart. Hour after hour passed away, each successively finding her more keenly and excitedly vigilant than its predecessor. At last she heard a stealthy sound at the door. The bolt cautiously revolved, and Monsieur de Barras's head, partially illumined by a shaded candle, was furtively introduced. He was obviously heated with "strong drink," and his odious face, inflamed with insolence and sensuality, appeared to her more appalling than could the most ghastly chimera of a nightmare, had it approached her in embodied and substantial shape.

This hated and dreaded form advanced, holding his breath, and on tiptoe, toward the bed where she lay. With a sudden effort, mastering the terrific fascination which held her, she started upright in her bed, and screamed in an agony of terror for Willett. The rustling in Willett's bed, and the addition of her voice, in an under key, to that which had greeted his entrance, arrested the progress of M. de Barras. He had evidently not calculated upon the presence of the attendant. Muttering some incoherent words implying that he had mistaken the apartment, and interspersing these broken sentences with abundance of suppressed but genuine imprecations, he hastily withdrew, and Willett promptly secured the door against the possibility of a renewed invasion.

This outrage was quite enough to determine Rhoda to adopt a course respecting which she had been long hesitating. Early next morning, attended by Willett, she glided from the sombre mansion, once her happy home, now grown unutterably terrible to her, and unimpeded and unsuspected, hurried in indescribable trepidation down the great avenue; keeping as she went as much under the cover of the ample rows of timber as was possible, she yet scarcely ventured to pause or look behind her, until she had passed the great gate, and entered the public road.

The reader will probably have anticipated us, when we relate that she held her way direct to Newton Park; and, on reaching the hall-door, requested the surprised domestic to inform Mrs. Mervyn that Miss Marston had taken the liberty of calling, and was most anxious to see her immediately.

"My dear young friend," said the kind lady, as soon as she had listened to poor Rhoda's narrative to its close, "I can scarcely describe the gratification with which I see you here—the happiness with which I welcome you to Newton Park; nor, indeed, the anxiety with which I constantly contemplated your trying and painful position at Dunoran. Indeed I ought to be angry with you for having refused me this happiness so long—but you have made amends at last; though, indeed, it was impossible to have deferred it longer. You must not fancy, however, that I will consent to leave you so soon as you seem to have in-

tended. No, no—I have found it too hard to catch you, to let you take wing so easily; beside, I have others to consult as well as myself, and persons, too, who are just as anxious as I am to make a prisoner of you here."

The good Mrs. Mervyn accompanied these words with looks so sly, and emphasis so significant, that Rhoda was fain to look down, to hide her blushes; and compassionating the confusion she herself had caused, the kind old lady led her with her to the chamber which was henceforward, as long as she consented to remain, to be her own apartment.

How that day was passed, and how fleetly its hours sped away, it is needless to tell. Old Mervyn had his gentle as well as his grim aspect; and no welcome was ever more cordial and tender than that with which he greeted the unprotected child of his unsocial and repulsive neighbour. It would be impossible to convey any idea of the manifold and important confidences which, after the manner of young ladies, the two pretty girls—Rhoda and Emily Howard—had mutually to make after their long separation. Nor need we describe the countless assiduities and the secret delight with which young Mervyn attended their rambles.

The party were assembled at supper. What a contrast did this cheerful, happy—unutterably happy—gathering, present in the mind of Rhoda, to the dull, drear, fearful evenings which she had long been wont to pass at Dunoran.

As they sate together in cheerful and happy intercourse, a chaise drove up to the hall-door, and the knocking had hardly ceased to reverberate, when a well-known voice was audible in the hall.

Young Mervyn started to his feet, and merrily ejaculating, "Charles Marston!—this *is* delightful!" disappeared, and in an instant returned with Charles himself.

We pass over all the embraces of brother and sister—the tears and smiles of re-united affection. We omit the cordial shaking of hands—the kind looks of all—the tender looks of some—the questions and answers—all these, and all the little attentions of that good old-fashioned hospitality, which was never weary of demonstrating the cordiality of its welcome—we abandon to the imagination of the kind reader. After the first hilarious expansion of all the genial feelings called into play by an unexpected and welcome arrival had subsided, it speedily became manifest that Charles Marston was depressed, or, at all events, perplexed by some pressing care or anxiety. His countenance, and more than even his looks—the fitful intervals of abstraction which interrupted his conversation, and evidenced his unconsciousness of what was passing about him—betrayed the urgency of this untold, and, as it seemed, painfully engrossing anxiety.

It was, therefore, with more of curiosity than surprise, that they heard Charles, after one of these fits of abstraction, abruptly ask old Mr. Mervyn to favour him with a few minutes' conversation, respecting a subject upon which he greatly desired his advice. With a ready assent the old gentleman arose, and led the way to his study.

"My dear sir," said Marston, as soon as they were seated and the door closed, "I do not know whether I ought to rejoice or to grieve at the strange and agitating information which has reached me. It is strange, shocking, but, at the same time, in a certain respect, most satisfactory. You will judge. It is now a few months since I received an anonymous letter, in which the writer, after strongly inveighing against Mademoiselle de Barras, declared that he was about, at an early day, to unfold to me such a train of villany and imposture upon her part, as would involve, perhaps, the necessity of placing her in the dock, to stand her trial for felony. Little good-will had I any reason, as you know, to bear towards Mademoiselle de Barras (for so I shall call her), yet this letter shocked and pained me. I felt, however, that I had no choice in the matter, and that I ought not to withhold from my father the fact that such a letter had reached me. I accordingly wrote, and received from him an answer so intemperate and so strange, that I resolved not again to allude to the subject, unless it was forced upon me in such an unequivocal and fully substantiated way as to demand investigation and ulterior proceedings. Well, sir, this *has* come to pass. A little more than a fortnight previously to my leaving Oxford, I received a second letter from the same

anonymous hand, enlarging, in matter of detail, upon the first, and promising further and more authenticated information. This was, a few days later, followed by a third, merely promising, in a few lines, an interview with the writer, and this time bearing the signature in full of 'John Crane.' This John Crane accordingly called upon me in my chambers, and judge yourself of the nature and effect of his communication."

Charles Marston then proceeded to detail what had passed between them, Mervyn listening meanwhile with the profoundest attention.

"And where is this John Crane?" inquired Mervyn, as soon as the strange narrative was concluded.

"I have brought him with me," answered young Marston. "I called here for the purpose of consulting you before going to Dunoran, as I am really agitated as to what course I ought to pursue."

"Well," said Mervyn, "it strikes me that this occurrence is a most fortunate one for you and for your sister, and indeed, I may add, for Mr. Marston himself. The effect of it must be to dissever a connexion which has been the curse of your family. Your father fancies me his enemy. I cannot disabuse his mind, but you will believe me when I say, that so far from wishing him ill, my earnest desire is to see him occupying the position which he ought to fill—to see him disenthralled from a bondage at once so degrading, and so grievous to be borne. I speak frankly to you, my young friend, and know you will not take offence at my plain expressions. Your father is a hot-tempered, and, I fear, an implacable man, and I have little hope of our ever being upon terms of pleasant intercourse; but, although he has once or twice succeeded in making me a little angry, I bear him no grudge; and thus far I believe you will bear me out."

"Indeed, my dear sir, I well know it," replied Charles, "and that I do so is proved, if no otherwise, by my consulting you upon a matter so nearly concerning his dearest interests, and throwing them and my own conduct entirely into your hands. Do, therefore, my dear and honoured friend, give me, freely and without fear of misconstruction, your advice in this painful and difficult emergency."

Mervyn mused for a time, and then observed—

"I think it very fortunate that your father happens to be absent just now. It was his intention to have met you, and returned in your company from Dublin; he will, therefore, probably not continue long from home; and it appears to me advisable in the highest degree that the crisis of this affair should have taken place before his return."

"The crisis! Then you think it necessary to proceed upon the information I have received?" asked Charles.

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Mervyn; "there is no honest alternative; you cannot do otherwise. I will myself take the information of this witness, John Crane—make out a warrant, and arrest the Frenchwoman tonight; and we can send her back to gaol in the chaise which brought you hither."

There was in the stern promptitude with which Mervyn proposed to act, something repulsive to the feelings of the younger man—something almost terrible. A few minutes' reflection, however, satisfied him that, sooner or later, such a step must be taken; and, as the procedure was inevitable, the desirableness of despatch, for every reason, was apparent.

"How did this John Crane come to be cognizant of the facts?" inquired Mervyn, pursuing the train of his own reflections.

"He was in Sir Wynston Berkley's service when he was at Rouen, where he formed an acquaintance with Mademoiselle de Barras," answered Marston, "and afterwards he was for nearly a year a servant in an English family resident in the same neighbourhood, where mademoiselle was subsequently domesticated as governess. But it was long previously to this that he witnessed the important event; and here, too, was received from Mademoiselle de Barras that injury, which, if I mistake not, he now seeks to avenge."

"Ay, ay," said Mervyn—"wheel within wheel—complication of motive and relation, as usual; and this injury was ——"

"Why, as he supposes, having her own reasons for removing him," an-

swered Charles, "she managed, without his discovering, or even suspecting her share in the matter—until within a few months since, he heard all in a chance interview with an old fellow-servant—she contrived, as I say, without appearing in the matter, to have his honesty suspected, and he was discharged in consequence without a character; and there, as I suspect, lies the whole motive of his conduct. The unhappy connexion with my father he learned from one of the late Sir Wynston's servants, whom he had known in France."

"His story is, however, consistent, whatever may be his motive," observed Mervyn. "If he forswears himself, he does so at his own proper peril—we must receive, and act upon his sworn deposition. As for you, I think it will be well, in order to avoid exciting their suspicion, that you should at once proceed to Dunoran. They will, unquestionably, soon hear of your arrival here—if, indeed, they have not already done so—and, in the process of their inquiries, goodness knows what other circumstances may come to their ears. Your witness, for instance, may have been talking amongst the servants. Do you, therefore, proceed to Dunoran as speedily as you may. I will see to all the rest, and follow as soon as preparations are completed."

As Charles was hurrying from Mr. Mervyn's study, intending, without again joining the party in the supper-room, to set out forthwith for Dunoran, he was encountered accidentally in the hall by Willett. With a kind but hurried greeting he was about to pass her, when one or two expressions which escaped her in her voluble welcome, touching her young mistress, fixed his attention and arrested his progress. Once engaged upon such a theme, it may easily be imagined he did not leave her until he had extracted from her a recital, inflamed with countless exaggerations, after the manner of such narrators, of the insolence to which his sister had been subjected by M. de Barras.

Such a narrative, it may easily be conceived, did not tend much to mitigate the feelings, or to calm the excitement with which he might naturally have been supposed to approach the inmates of Dunoran. From his father he had inherited a fiery and somewhat haughty temper, and his pride and his indignation were incensed to the uttermost at the idea of the insult which had been offered to his beloved and unprotected sister, in her own home, by this audacious French parasite. Snuffing the night air angrily, and with rapid strides, he traversed the sombre interval of ancient woodland which interposed between Newton Park and the desolate mansion-house of Dunoran. His mind agitated and engrossed by these energetic and stormy emotions, he was scarcely conscious of the interval he had passed when he found himself under the shadow of its melancholy and neglected walls.

Without giving any summons, he turned the latch-pin, moveable, as in many Irish country houses, from the outside. Neither bar nor bolt secured the door as yet; and pushing it open, he stood alone, and unperceived, in the solemn shadow of the old hall. Here he paused for a moment. There was in his peculiar situation something so unwonted and even horrible, that a sense of awe overcame him, and he felt as an avenging spectre, stealing by night, unfelt and unseen, through old familiar scenes upon its preternatural mission, might be fancied to do. He passed on to the inner hall; a door opening from it was ajar, and a light shone through the aperture. Charles Marston entered, and found himself alone with the handsome Frenchwoman.

She started, and changed colour. Perhaps the awkwardness of Rhoda's absence, and the difficulty of accounting for it satisfactorily, disconcerted her; or, it may be, one of those mysterious and ominous misgivings, portending unknown and undefined disaster, agitated her soul; or perhaps, again, there was that in Marston's countenance which spoke of danger. She looked in his face with a gloomy surprise, and coldly said—

"Mr. Marston is in Dublin, and we did not expect you to-night. Your arrival is unlooked for; but whatever you require, you can have."

And so saying, she rang the bell, and again fixed her full dark eyes anxiously upon him.

Spite of all his sense of right, Charles Marston felt a certain com-

motion and sickening of the heart, as he looked upon the fated, forlorn, and guilty being, upon whose defenceless head a storm so irresistibly awful was about to burst.

"I require nothing—nothing at present," he said, in subdued and hurried accents.

A long pause ensued, in which the servant came and went—an ominous and painful interval.

"Where is my sister?" asked he, abruptly, and with the unacknowledged design, it may be, of forcing his mind into a channel less painful than the compunctious and half-relenting one into which it was insensibly gliding.

"She is gone to visit a friend," answered 'Madame,' with a perceptible change of colour; and while she spoke, as fortune would have it, M. de Barras swaggered lazily into the room.

The sight of this ruffian, doubly hateful from all he had lately learned of him—presented at the very moment, too, when the image of his insulted sister has risen before his mind—the sister whom his unmanly insolence had driven from the house, whose comforts and command he was now coolly usurping—this provoking apparition was seasonably presented, and in a moment all the fierce and angry emotions which Charles at first experienced, had rushed back with a fury a hundredfold intensified.

"Ah!—*parbleu*—Master Charles, himself, I suppose!" ejaculated he, in his native tongue, at the same time throwing himself carelessly into a chair, and eying the young man with supercilious familiarity.

"Where is my sister, and for what cause has she left the house?" he reiterated, in a tone which showed how fearfully his wrath had been kindled at sight of the easy Frenchman.

"Answer him—why don't you answer him, *ma sœur?*" said M. de Barras, carelessly.

"*Sister!*—how dare you call madame there your sister?" said Marston, sternly.

M. de Barras started perceptibly, and darted a frightened glance of inquiry at the Frenchwoman. She stood motionless as a figure of stone, and so deadly pale, that she appeared on the very point of fainting.

"Yes," cried Marston, fiercely, "your looks betray you. *Sister*, indeed! abominable, degraded impostor!"

"Why, what do you mean? a hundred thousand devils, what do you mean, Monsieur," cried the Frenchman, assuming the tone and swagger of a bully.

"You *know* what I mean, dog!—Madame there knows what I mean," thundered Charles, losing all command of himself, "she is not your sister—she is your WIFE."

"My—my—my wife?" faltered de Barras, with a corpse-like visage.

"Ay, your wife—your *wife*; mean, pitiful scoundrel," cried Charles.

"Why, how is this?—what do you say?—wife, wife, indeed! My faith! the young gentleman has strange dreams," said Mademoiselle, rallying a little, with an effort, and affecting to laugh, but looking ghastly as death.

"Don't fancy that you can maintain the vile cheat one hour longer," persisted the young man; "man and wife you two are—man and wife; and I can prove it, and *will* prove it, too, where proof will have its proper weight. I have not come unprovided with testimony; I have a witness with me—one whom you well remember—whose name will confound you—the servant who himself witnessed the ceremony. You cannot pretend to forget John Crane, who, at your own desire, witnessed the marriage: he is with me; I have brought him here; and we shall soon see whether his testimony is worthy of credit or not."

Mademoiselle de Barras attempted to speak—cleared her voice, and again attempted it; but all her wonted presence of mind, her practised coolness and courage, forsook her, and she trembled violently, merely repeating, after an interval, in a gasping whisper, "Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!"

"And you, sir—*not* Monsieur de Barras"—pursued Charles, with bitter and furious scorn, "but Monsieur Rocqueville, as I am informed—you, detestable, abject scoundrel, you have dared to insult my sister, Miss Marston, in her own home, and to force her to seek an asylum in the house of a stranger. Execrable poltroon! what can you answer to this charge?"

"Ma foi," cried the Frenchman, setting his arms akimbo, while his countenance wore that worst of characters, a mixture of livid fear and

fury; "here is a pretty piece of work, and all got up by a fool of a coxcomb. Psha! the girl knows what she is about, and was glad of an excuse to throw herself into young Monsieur Mervyn's arms."

The cool insolence of this reply transported Marston to such a pitch of fury, that, forgetting every consideration in his sense of outrage and audacity, he collared the rascal, and struck him, with his whole force, twice in the face with his clenched hand. He staggered, nearly stunned, against the wall, and recovering himself, half drew his sword, but returned it with vehemence to its scabbard, and slunk muttering from the room, the very type of a cowed and malignant bully. With the disappearance of this wretch, Charles Marston's furious excitement subsided, and he looked round the room like one newly awakened from a fit of delirium. He felt a painful revulsion as his eye lighted upon the form of the young, the lost and miserable being, whose destruction was now inevitably drawing near. He turned and stood in the doorway, with his face averted. After a few moments of silence, he heard a slight rustling behind him, and a hand was laid upon his arm. He looked round—Mademoiselle was gazing up into his face, with a look so wan, so imploring and woe-begone, that he felt a pang of pity, almost of fear, stir his heart. This look of mute, agonised entreaty, was fixed on him for many seconds, and then without one word spoken, the wretched and guilty woman glided to a sofa, sate down, and covered her face with her hands.

Oppressed with a strange and horrible conflict of feelings, he hurried silently from her presence, resolved to stay the execution of the warrant until the morning, and himself to escape the harrowing spectacle.

With feelings very different from those with which he had approached the house, he now emerged into the chill night air, and pursued his solitary way under the airy vaulting of the solemn and densely dark trees; and, ever as he went, he seemed to hear the rustling sound behind him—to feel the light pressure on his arm—and to see the death-like features, and full, earnest eyes of the doomed Frenchwoman, upturned to his face.

He felt the inevitability of the measure about to be taken—his reason acknowledged alike its necessity and its justice. He saw too that, morally, he would himself be accessory to an abominable and flagitious imposture, if he suppressed the evidence, which it was impossible to make public without the destruction of the fallen woman, for whom, spite of everything, he could not divest his mind of some sentiment of compassion.

It was now arranged that on the next morning the guilty woman should be arrested, and Charles Marston laid his throbbing head upon the pillow that night in great perturbation and excitement.

When the grey light of morning visited his sleepless eyes, Charles Marston rose, sorely troubled in mind—filled with new anxieties and alarms—foremost among which was the conjecture that his father might, in the interval, have haply returned, and that, in the wayward and ungoverned burst of fury too likely to be evoked in the coming collision, he might commit some act of crime or violence which would fatally compromise himself.

Mr. Mervyn, more than ever impressed with the importance (as regarded the interests, prospects, and position of his young friends in whose welfare he took so keen an interest) of successfully conducting the painful but necessary measures which he himself had advised, determined that no conventional obstacles of false delicacy should stand in the way of what he regarded as a duty, and an act of mercy to an abused and injured family, and himself accompanied the party, who proceeded to Dunoran upon this unwonted and disagreeable mission.

It was a dreary, misty, ominous morning, and, brushing the moisture from the withered grass, Charles Marston paced and repaced the space which lay under the wall of the gate-house of Newton Park, awaiting, in agitated suspense, the return of the little party whose departure he had so lately witnessed.

Twenty times did he consult his watch, and listen breathlessly for the sound of their return; more and more painful, minute after minute, did his suspense become. At length, when nearly twice the interval on which he had calculated had actually expired, he

heard the rumble and grinding of the chaise wheels rapidly approaching. His first impulse was to run forward and anticipate its arrival—his next was to draw further back from the entrance, and postpone, if possible, the scene which was now so painfully imminent. With a beating heart and pale face, he awaited the approaching disclosure. The vehicle stopped, and Mr. Mervyn alone got out.

"Egad, Charles, they have stolen a march upon us; they left the place together last night, not an hour after your visit," said Mr. Mervyn.

"She has escaped, then?" said Charles.

"Ay, ay, the demirep—she has got the start of us by ten good hours," replied he.

"Thank God!" said Charles, mechanically, and drawing a deep sigh.

"Hey! egad, I suspect you're a blockhead, sir," said old Mervyn, testily.

Marston hastened to appease the worthy old gentleman's irritation, by a profusion of thanks and acknowledgments for his kindness and advice.

"Well, well," said he, "the thing can't be helped; so let us dismiss it, at all events, for the present, and get home to our breakfast."

And, so saying, he placed his arm in that of the young man, and they walked together to the house.

* * * * * * * *

Mademoiselle de Barras was indeed the wife of Rocqueville—married but to be cast off and forsaken by the villain whom she had loved with something like idolatry. Thrown upon the world, with a heart fired with resentment, and wrung with sorrow, she had yielded up her soul to the darkest passions and the wildest grief. For years she had neither seen nor heard of him, and for years the struggling emotions of sorrow, fierce resentment, and unavailing love, maintained her, in the absence of higher and better influences, against the assaults of those constant temptations to which, in a dissolute age, her extreme beauty, and now unprotected condition, exposed her. Naturally ambitious and intriguing, the perilous tendencies of such a spirit had never been schooled in her by the mighty and benignant principles of religion. Of her accidental acquaintance at Rouen with Sir Wynston Berkley, and her subsequent introduction, in an evil hour, into the family at Dunoran, it is unnecessary to speak. The unhappy terms on which she found Marston living with his wife, suggested, in their mutual alienation, the idea of founding a double influence in the household; and to conceive the idea, and to act upon it, were, in her active mind, the same. Young, beautiful, fascinating, she well knew the power of her attractions, and determined, though probably without one thought of transgressing the limits of literal propriety, to bring them all to bear upon the discontented, retired *roué*, for whom she cared absolutely nothing, except as the instrument, and in part the victim of her schemes. Thus yielding to the double instinct that swayed her, she gratified, at the same time, her love of intrigue and her love of power. At length, however, came the hour which demanded a sacrifice to the evil influence she had hitherto worshipped on such easy terms. She found that her power must now be secured by crime, and she fell. Then came the arrival of Sir Wynston—his murder—her elopement with Marston, and, in the midst of her guilty and joyless triumph, the arrival of her husband, who, reduced, by some one of those reverses incident even to the expertest of gamesters, to destitution, bethought him at last of his wife, made inquiries, traced, followed, and found her. Her situation enabled him to command his own terms; and, strange to say, spite of his meanness, rapacity, and selfish profligacy, she still loved him. What can entirely kill the first love of a woman's heart, or what entirely disenchant the once idolized object? Thus bound together in degraded conspiracy, they lived on from day to day. At last, however, came the blow, long suspended and terrific, which shattered all their hopes and schemes, and drove them once again upon the world. She and her husband made their way unobstructed to Dublin, where they parted, and by different routes met again in London, and thence pursued their way to Paris. Arrived in the capital of France, Rocqueville speedily dissipated, in the profligate courses to which he immediately returned, whatever remained of the money and valuables which his wife had taken with her from Dunoran

in her hurried flight; and Madame de Rocqueville, as she now styled herself, was glad to place herself once more as governess in an aristocratic family. So far her good fortune had prevailed in averting the punishment but too well-earned by her past life. But a day of reckoning was to come. A few years later, France was involved in the uproar and conflagration of revolution. Noble families were scattered, beggared, decimated; and their dependants, often dragged along with them into the flaming abyss, in many instances suffered the last dire extremities of human ill. It was at this awful period that a retribution so frightful and so extraordinary overtook Madame de Rocqueville, that we may hereafter be tempted to make it the subject of a separate and detailed narrative. Until then the reader will rest satisfied with what he already knows of her history; and meanwhile bid a long, and as it may possibly turn out, an eternal farewell to that beautiful embodiment of an evil and disastrous influence.

* * * * * * *

Charles Marston, with the advice of his friend, Mr. Mervyn, resolved to lose no time in proceeding to Dublin, whither it was ascertained his father had gone, with the declared intention of meeting and accompanying him home. He arrived in town in the evening; and having previously learned that Dr. Danvers had been for some days in Dublin, he at once sought him at his usual lodgings, and found the worthy old gentleman at his solitary "dish" of tea.

"My dear Charles," said he, greeting his young friend with earnest warmth, "I am rejoiced beyond measure to see you. Your father *is* in town, as you supposed; and I have just had a note from him, which has, I confess, not a little agitated me, referring, as it does, to a subject of painful and horrible interest — one with which, I suppose, you are familiar, but upon which I myself have never yet spoken fully to any person, excepting your father only."

"And pray, my dear sir, what *is* this topic?" inquired Charles, with marked interest.

"Read this note," answered the clergyman, placing one at the same time in his young visitor's hand.

Charles read as follows:—

"My dear Sir,—I have a singular communication to make to you, but in the strictest privacy, with reference to a subject which merely to name, is to awaken feelings of doubt and horror—I mean the confession of Merton, with respect to the murder of Wynston Berkley. I will call upon you this evening after dark; for I have certain reasons for not caring to meet old acquaintances about town; and if you can afford me half-an-hour, I promise to complete my intended disclosure within that time. Let us be strictly private — this is my only proviso. Yours with much respect,

"Richard Marston."

"Your father has been sorely troubled in mind," said Dr. Danvers, as soon as the young man had read this communication; "he has told me as much; it may be that the discovery he has now made may possibly have relieved him of certain galling anxieties. The fear that unjust suspicion should light upon himself, or those connected with him, has, I dare say, tormented him sorely. God grant, that as the providential unfolding of all the details of this mysterious crime comes about, he may be brought to recognise, in the just, terrible process, the hand of heaven. God grant, that at last his heart may be softened, and his spirit illuminated by the blessed influence he has so long and so sternly rejected."

As the old man thus spake—as if in symbolic answering to his prayer—a sudden glory from the setting sun streamed through the funereal pile of clouds which filled the western horizon, and flooded the chamber where they were.

After a silence, Charles Marston said, with some little embarrassment "It may be a strange confession to make, though, indeed, hardly so to you—for you know but too well the gloomy reserve with which my father has uniformly treated me—that the exact nature of Merton's confession never reached my ears; and once or twice, when I approached the subject, in conversation with you, it seemed to me that the subject was one which, for some reason, it was painful to you to enter upon."

"And so it was, in truth, my young friend—so it was; for that confession

left behind it many fearful doubts, proving, indeed, nothing but the one fact, that, *morally*, the wretched man was guilty of the murder."

Charles, urged by a feeling of the keenest interest, requested Dr. Danvers to detail to him the particulars of the dying man's narration.

"Willingly," answered Dr. Danvers, with a look of gloom, and heaving a profound sigh—"willingly, for you have now come to an age when you may safely be entrusted with secrets affecting your own family, and which, although, thank God, as I believe, they in no respect involve the honor of any one of its members, yet might deeply involve its peace and its security against the assaults of vague and horrible slander. Here, then, is the narrative: Merton, when he was conscious of the approach of death, qualified, by a circumstantial and detailed statement, the absolute confession of guilt which he had at first sullenly made. In this he declared that the guilt of design and intention only was his—that in the act itself he had been *anticipated*. He stated, that from the moment when Sir Wynston's servant had casually mentioned the circumstance of his master's usually sleeping with his watch and pocket-book under his pillow, the idea of robbing him had taken possession of his mind. With the idea of robbing him (under the peculiar circumstances, his servant sleeping in the apartment close by, and the slightest alarm being, in all probability, sufficient to call him to the spot) the idea of anticipating resistance by murder had associated itself. He had contended against these haunting and growing solicitations of Satan with an earnest and horrible agony. He had intended to leave his place, and fly from the mysterious temptation which he felt he wanted power to combat, but accident or fate prevented him. In a state of ghastly excitement he had, on the memorable night of Sir Wynston's murder, proceeded, as had afterwards appeared in evidence, by the back stair to the baronet's chamber; he had softly stolen into it, and proceeded to the bedside, with the weapon in his hand. He drew his breath for the decisive stroke, which was to bereave the (supposed) sleeping man of life, and when stretching his left hand under the clothes, it rested upon a dull, cold corpse, and, at the same moment, his right hand was immersed in a pool of blood. He dropped the knife, recoiled a pace or so, and a feeling of absolute terror for a moment froze him. With a painful effort, however, he again grasped with his hand to recover the weapon he had suffered to escape, and secured, as it afterwards turned out, not the knife with which he had meditated the commission of his crime, but the dagger which was afterwards found where he had concealed it. He was now fully alive to the horror of his situation; he was compromised as fully as if he had in very deed driven home the weapon which had let out the heart's blood of the dead sinner who was lying in the dark beside him. To be found under such circumstances, would convict him as surely as if fifty eyes had seen him strike the murderous blow. He had nothing now for it but flight; and in order to guard himself against the contingency of being surprised from the door opening upon the corridor, he bolted it; then groped under the murdered man's pillow, for the booty which had so fatally fascinated his imagination. Here he was disappointed. What further happened you already know."

Charles listened with breathless attention to this recital, and after a painful interval, said:—

"Then the actual murderer is, after all, unascertained. This is, indeed, horrible; it was very natural that my father should have felt the danger to which such a disclosure would have exposed the reputation of our family, yet *I* should have preferred encountering it, were it ten times as great, to the equivocal prudence of suppressing the truth with respect to a murder committed under my own roof."

"He has, however, it would seem, arrived at some new conclusions," said Dr. Danvers, "and is now prepared to throw some unanticipated light upon the whole transaction."

Even as they were talking, a knocking was heard at the hall-door, and after a brief and hurried consultation, it was agreed, that considering the strict condition of privacy attached to this visit by Mr. Marston himself, as well as his reserved and wayward temper, it might be better for Charles to avoid presenting himself to his father on this occasion. A few seconds

afterwards the door opened, and Mr. Marston entered the apartment. It was now dark, and the servant, unbidden, placed candles upon the table. Without answering one word to Dr. Danvers' greeting, Marston sate down, as it seemed, in agitated abstraction. Removing his hat suddenly (for he had not even made this slight homage to the laws of courtesy), he looked round with a careworn, fiery eye, and a pale countenance, and said—

"We are quite alone, Dr. Danvers—no one anywhere near?"

Dr. Danvers assured him that all was secure.

After a long and agitated pause, Marston said—

"You remember Merton's confession. He admitted his *intention* to kill Berkley, but denied that he was the actual murderer. He spoke truth—no one knew it better than I; for *I* am the murderer."

Dr. Danvers was so shocked and overwhelmed that he was utterly unable to speak.

"Ay, sir, in point of law and of morals, literally and honestly, the MURDERER of Wynston Berkley. I am resolved you shall know it all. Make what use of it you will—I care for nothing now, but to get rid of the d——d, unsustainable secret, and that is done. I did not intend to kill the scoundrel when I went to his room; but with the just feelings of exasperation with which I regarded him, it would have been wiser had I avoided the interview; and I meant to have done so. But his candle was burning; I saw the light through the door, and went in. It was his evil fortune to indulge in his old strain of sardonic impertinence. He provoked me; I struck him—he struck me again—and with his own dagger I stabbed him three times. I did not know what I had done—I could not believe it. I felt neither remorse nor sorrow—why should I?—but the thing was horrible, astounding. There he sate in the corner of his cushioned chair, with the old fiendish smile on still. Sir, I never thought that any human shape could look so dreadful. I don't know how long I stayed there, freezing with horror and detestation, and yet unable to take my eyes from the d——d face. Did you see it in the coffin? Sir, there was a sneer of triumph on it that was diabolic and prophetic."

Marston was fearfully agitated as he spoke, and repeatedly wiped from his face the cold sweat that gathered there.

"I could not leave the room by the back stairs," he resumed, "for the valet slept in the intervening chamber. I felt such an appalled antipathy to the body that I could scarce muster courage to pass it. But, sir, I am not easily cowed—I mastered this repugnance in a few minutes—or, rather, I acted in spite of it, I knew not how—but instinctively it seemed to me that it was better to lay the body in the bed, than leave it where it was, shewing, as its position might, that the thing occurred in an altercation. So, sir, I raised it, and bore it softly across the room, and laid it in the bed; and, while I was carrying it, it swayed forward, the arms glided round my neck, and the head rested against my cheek—that *was* a parody upon a brotherly embrace!"

"I do not know at what moment it was, but some time when I was carrying Wynston, or laying him in the bed," continued Marston, who spoke rather like one pursuing a horrible reverie, than as a man relating facts to a listener, "I heard a light tread, and soft breathing, in the lobby. A thunder-clap would have stunned me less that minute. I moved softly, holding my breath, to the door. I believe, in moments of strong excitement, men hear more acutely than at other times; but I thought I heard the rustling of a gown, going *from* the door again. I waited—it ceased; I waited until all was quiet. I then extinguished the candle, and groped my way to the door; there was a faint degree of light in the corridor, and I thought I saw a head projected from the chamber-door next to the Frenchwoman's—Mademoiselle's. As I came on, it was softly withdrawn, and the door not quite noiselessly closed. I could not be absolutely certain, but I learned all afterward. And now, sir, you have the story of Sir Wynston's murder."

Doctor Danvers groaned in spirit, being wrung alike with fear and sorrow. With hands clasped, and head bowed down, in an exceeding bitter agony of soul, he murmured only the words of the Litany—"Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us."

Marston had recovered his usual

lowering aspect and gloomy self-possession in a few moments, and was now standing erect and defiant before the humbled and afflicted minister of God. The contrast was terrible—almost sublime.

* * * *

Doctor Danvers resolved to keep this dreadful secret, at least for a time, to himself. He could not make up his mind to inflict upon those whom he loved so well as Charles and Rhoda the shame and agony of such a disclosure; yet he was sorely troubled—for his was a conflict of duty and mercy—of love and justice.

He told Charles Marston, when urged with earnest inquiry, that what he had heard that evening was intended solely for his own ear, and gently but peremptorily declined telling, at least until some future time, the substance of his father's communication.

Charles now felt it necessary to see his father, for the purpose of letting him know the substance of the evidence which had reached him, and also the events which had so recently occurred at Dunoran. Accordingly he proceeded, accompanied by Dr. Danvers, on the next morning, to the hotel where Marston had intimated his intention of passing the night.

On their inquiring for him in the hall, the porter appeared much perplexed and disturbed, and as they pressed him with questions, his answers became conflicting and mysterious. Mr. Marston was there—he had slept there last night; he could not say whether or not he was then in the house; but he knew that no one could be admitted to see him. He would, if the gentlemen wished it, send their cards to (*not* Mr. Marston, but) the *proprietor*: and finally, he concluded by begging that they would themselves see "the proprietor," and despatched a waiter to apprise him of the circumstances of the visit. There was something odd and even sinister in all this, which, along with the whispering and the curious glances of the waiters, who happened to hear the errand on which they came, inspired the two companions with vague and fearful misgivings which they did not care mutually to disclose.

In a few moments they were shown into a small sitting-room up stairs, where the proprietor, a fussy little gentleman, and apparently very uneasy and frightened, received them.

"We have called here to see Mr. Marston," said Dr. Danvers, "and the porter has referred us to you."

"Yes, sir, exactly—precisely so," answered the little man, fidgeting excessively, and, as it seemed, growing paler, every instant; "but—but, in fact, sir, there is—there has been—in short, have not you heard of the—the *accident?*" He wound up with a prodigious effort, and wiped his forehead when he had done.

"Pray, sir, be explicit; we are near friends of Mr. Marston—in fact, sir, this is his son," said Dr. Danvers, pointing to Charles Marston; "and we are both uneasy at the strange mystery with which our inquiries have been met. Do, I entreat of you, say what has happened?"

"Why—why," hesitated the man, "I really—I would not for five hundred pounds it had happened in my house. The—the unhappy gentleman has, in short——" He glanced at Charles, as if afraid of the effect of the disclosure he was on the point of making, and then hurriedly said, "He is *dead*, sir; he was found dead in his room—this morning, at eight o'clock. I assure you I have not been myself ever since."

Charles Marston was so stunned and overcome by this sudden blow, that he was upon the point of fainting. Rallying, however, with a strong effort, he demanded to be conducted to the chamber where the body lay. The man assented, but hesitated on reaching the door, and whispered something in the ear of Dr. Danvers, who, as he heard it, raised his hands and eyes with a mute expression of horror, and turning to Charles, said—

"My dear young friend, remain where you are for a few moments; I will return to you immediately, and tell you whatever I have ascertained. You are in no condition for such a scene at present."

Charles, indeed, felt that the fact was so, and sick and giddy, suffered Dr. Danvers, with gentle compulsion, to force him into a seat.

In silence the venerable clergyman followed his conductor. With a palpitating heart he advanced to the bed-

side, and twice essayed to draw the curtain, and twice lost courage; but gathering resolution at last, he pulled the drapery aside, and beheld all he was to see again of Richard Marston. The bedclothes were drawn, so as nearly to cover the mouth; the eyes were open, and the face was hideously swollen.*

"*There* is the wound, sir," whispered the man, as with coarse officiousness he drew back the bedclothes from the throat of the corpse, and exhibited a frightful, yawning gash, as it seemed, nearly severing the head from the body. With sickening horror Dr. Danvers turned away from the awful spectacle. He covered his face in his hands, and it seemed to him as if a soft, solemn voice whispered in his ear the mystic words, "Whoso shedeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

The hand which, but a few years before, had, unsuspected, consigned a fellow-mortal to the grave, had itself avenged the murder—Marston had perished by his own hand.

* * * * *

The concluding chapter in a novel is always brief, though seldom so short as the world would have it. In a tale like this, the "winding up" must be proportionably contracted. We have scarcely a claim to so many lines as the formal novelist may occupy pages, in the distribution of poetic justice, and the final grouping of his characters into that effective tableau upon which, at last, the curtain gracefully descends. We, too, may be all the briefer, inasmuch as the reader has doubtless anticipated the little we have to say. It amounts then to this:—Within two years after the fearful event which we have just recorded, a double alliance had drawn together, in nearer and dearer union, the inmates of Dunoran and Newton Park. Charles Marston had won and wed the fair Emily Howard. Rhoda had given her hand to young Mervyn. Of ulterior consequences we say nothing—the nursery is above our province. And now, at length, after this three months' journey through somewhat stern and gloomy scenery, in this long-deferred flood of golden sunshine we bid thee, gentle reader, a kind farewell.

LINES FOR MUIC.

Toll no sullen bell for me,
  None when I am dying,
Let my spirit's requiem be
  But the zephyr's sighing,
And the woodbirds' melody
  When the day is dying.

Rear no solemn marble where
  Low my head reposes,
Let earth's sweet flow'rs blossom there,
  Lilies pure and roses,
And beside it children fair
  Sport and gather posies.

I have loved, and life was dear,
  All its pulses thorough;
He is dead, and life is drear,
  Why, then, should ye sorrow?
Strew no cypress on my bier—
  We shall meet to-morrow.

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* A common phenomenon in such cases; the severed muscles shrinking up into the face.

THE STATE PROSECUTIONS.

THE "state prosecutions" have closed, after two minor failures, in the conviction of John Mitchel under the recent statute. This is unquestionably a momentous result; for had justice, in his case, been defeated, it is difficult to calculate the vastness of the possible, and even probable, consequences. Two prosecutions had already been frustrated under circumstances most painfully and impressively illustrative of the social condition of this country. Had a third, and incomparably the most momentous, in like manner failed, it would have been difficult to combat the conclusion, that the entire of that arm of the law which visits *political* offences was paralysed in Ireland. Had Mr. Mitchel escaped, it would, indeed, have been appallingly plain that no extravagance of seditious language, no audacity or truculence of treasonable design or incentive, could any longer, in Ireland, be made amenable to the existing laws; and that either the constitution which juries refused to administer, must have been superseded by the temporary rigours of a despotism, or else unpunished sedition have been permitted to ripen and increase in insolence and organisation, until some hideous outbreak, provoking the direst retaliations of military severity, should have terminated the feverish *interregnum*, and extinguished the hopes of treason amidst the blood and smoke of desolation. Thank God, an alternative so gloomy has not been forced upon the country, and that the righteous penalty of the law, honestly administered, has, in crushing one public offender, saved, perhaps, the lives and fortunes of innocent thousands.

The failure in the comparatively insignificant cases of Messrs. O'Brien and Meagher—comparatively insignificant alike in relation to the importance of the traversers themselves, and to the severity of the penalty sought to be enforced—is more than compensated by the complete vindication of the law in the verdict against Mr. Mitchel. Every thinking man who has watched the history of the Irish agitation for the last six months, must perceive in this John Mitchel, not merely the ringleader, but the creator of the entire revolutionary system here, at least in its present armed and threatening attitude.

We treat John Mitchel as the leader of this insurrectionary movement in Ireland, for such he unquestionably was. The peculiar attitude of his party—the perils they threaten, and the perils in which they stand, are all *his* work. He was, so far as the public have yet the materials for judging, the only formidable man among them. It is impossible to read his speeches and writings, and not to be impressed with the striking evidences everywhere apparent, of that impetuous abandonment of self, which characterises the genuine fanatic. He was full to overflowing of his malign inspiration. The one idea, the one aspiration engaged his head and heart.

He was thoroughly in earnest, and consequently really dangerous. In juxtaposition with such a man, the mere vulgar, histrionic agitator looks the "walking shadow" that he is. Mitchel wrote and spoke irrespectively of display; he gave us no pompous metaphors, no affected quaintness, no vapid parodies upon the style of "Sartor Resartus." He seems to have been equally destitute of vanity, and of fear. Ireland republicanised and communised was his engrossing idea; he saw nothing else, cared for nothing else—it had transfixed his vision; and without regarding either natural or artificial obstacles, pitfalls or quagmires, social barriers or legal chasms, he pushed on doggedly toward his purpose. He was no favourite with the ostensible leaders of his party; he had renounced the *Nation*, and turned his back upon the Confederates, because, notwithstanding their cant about "earnest men," perennially longing for that which, in modern Irish history, though always approaching, never arrives, "the occasion" for drawing the sword, and all the rest of their warlike fustian, he clearly discerned in them and their system a mere reproduction, with a few melodramatic accessories, of the coarse old sham of Conciliation Hall. He became a seceder, if not an outcast, set up on his own account; and the *United Irishman*, together with rifle clubs, drilling, and thirty thousand pikes, were the results. Mitchel, even though he stood alone, was resolved to follow out the principle professed by the Confederation to its logical conclusion. Disentangled from his associates, he was instantly in advance of them all; and they found themselves reduced to the bitter necessity of either surrendering into his hands the revolutionary lead, or keeping abreast of him in a march of no visionary danger. He alone was resolved to press forward—a strong-willed, one-ideaed, desperate man; and the rest were all hurried on, like flies, in the rush of his career.

In Mitchel the sedition has lost its motive power, its real chief—one dreaded and hated infinitely more by the sham leaders of the movement (whom he was remorselessly forcing into a literal fulfilment of their bombastic promises), than ever he was by the most hypochondriac friend of tranquillity. We therefore look upon *his* conviction (independently of the stern example involved in his severer punishment), as incomparably more momentous than that of any fifty of his associates. Among those with whom the public is as yet acquainted, there is no man to take his place. Others as yet unknown, indeed, there possibly—nay (judging from some indications we have seen), even *probably* may be—*eléves* of his austere and reckless school—who are willing and able to fill the vacant post, and prepared to devote themselves to civil extinction with the same stoical fanaticism. And while we are upon this theme, we must needs remark, that had the government, instead of trifling with this novel and serious agitation at first, instead of permitting it, week after week, and month after month, to proceed, for a quarter of a year, undisturbed in its dangerous and abominable propagandism—covering a real indecision and trepidation with what we are forced to term an hypocrisy of contemptuous indifference—if, instead of this procrastination and duplicity, the government had exhibited even ordinary promptitude and vigour, the first number of the *United Irishman* would have been prosecuted—in the then state of the public mind, a verdict certainly procured—and, perhaps, one year's imprisonment would have expiated the guilty frenzy of the convicted journalist, and effectually checked this sanguinary agitation. This dilatory policy has made a FELON of John Mitchel, and is distinctly chargeable, not only with the fate of this victim, but of the dozens of other victims who are too probably to follow in his wake.

We find in the course of these trials some very startling, social as well as political, phenomena. Irish trial by jury for political offences, has always been a very precarious process. But in the dissensions of the two special juries respectively sworn in Mr. Meagher's and Mr. O'Brien's cases, there is so much that is instructive, that it were improper, in any discussion of these proceedings, however brief or hurried, to omit to notice their history. The subject has, indeed, been brought before the notice of the House of Commons, in one of its aspects, by Mr. Keogh, and some curious ministerial lights elicited in the collisions of debate. The facts are soon told.

In striking the special juries in Mr. Meagher's case, out of twelve Roman Catholics who attended, the crown set aside eleven. In forming the jury for the subsequent, and more important trial of Mr. Mitchel, the proceedings of the crown were still more marked and instructive. The panel consisted of one hundred and fifty names; of these, one hundred and ten were called, and seventy-one answered. From this number, fifty-five of whom were Protestants, and sixteen Roman Catholics, the jury was formed. The Roman Catholic attorney-general, reviving a prerogative which ever since Sir Michael O'Loghlen filled that office in Ireland, had been, as we believe, most unwisely abandoned by the crown, peremptorily challenged thirty-nine, and in the number thus set aside was included every individual Roman Catholic who was called—amounting, in all, to sixten persons. This was the act, not of Mr. Kemmis, nor of any other subordinate, but of the Roman Catholic attorney-general himself—the legal organ of the Irish government. The government, therefore, must themselves bear the undivided odium (unjust as we believe it to be) of this necessary, but startling procedure—and they must also acquiesce in all the consequences logically deducible from the great social admission it involves. We quite agree with Lord John Russell, that it would be preposterous to accuse a Whig government, and a Roman Catholic attorney-general, of setting aside Roman Catholic jurors, merely on account of their religion. We cannot gainsay his Lordship's boast, to the effect that his partialities are all precisely in the opposite direction. The principle on which the attorney-general founded his instructions to Mr. Kemmis, and upon which, of course, in the exercise of the crown prerogative, he himself acted, we shall state from his own lips—"The only instruction that was given was this," observed the attorney-general, in stating the case against Mr. Mitchel—"Obtain an honest, fair, and impartial jury. Any man who, from your information, you believe not to be a man who will give an impartial verdict between the crown and the subject, that man, and that man alone—without reference to his religion—you are to exclude from the panel." This is a satisfactory vindication of the *government*, but how does it affect the character of her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, by, through, and for whom, for nearly twenty years, this country has been governed? It so happens that, acting upon this constitutional principle of selection, every single Roman Catholic (with the exception of three, to whom we shall presently have to allude) who presented himself as a juror upon these prosecutions, was made to stand aside by the crown. The crown officers, in removing from the jury those whom, in the words of the attorney-general in the same case, "they had reason to know *concurred and coincided in the politics of the prisoner*," happened also, by a strange coincidence (with the exception already mentioned), to exclude *every individual Roman Catholic* who was called. But there *were* exceptions. Three Roman Catholics were permitted to serve—two upon the special jury who tried Mr. O'Brien, and one upon that who tried Mr. Meagher. In both these cases the juries unfortunately *disagreed*, and, upon sifting the matter, it was ascertained, that *the only two Roman Catholics* upon Mr. O'Brien's jury, happened to be also *the only two dissentients* from a verdict of guilty agreed to by the other ten jurors. Precisely similar, too, was the result in Mr. Meagher's case. *One dissentient* there frustrated a verdict of guilty, agreed upon by eleven jurors, and by a like coincidence it turns out, that that one dissentient was also the *one Roman Catholic* in the jury-box.

The inference from all this is inevitable, aided as it is by the fact, that the *common* jury who afterwards tried Mr. Mitchel, although composed of men of every shade of political opinion, yet *not* containing a single Roman Catholic, *did* find a verdict for the crown. Do those facts indicate the respective loyalty and disaffection of the Protestant and Roman Catholic population of Ireland; and do they also illustrate the weakness, the duplicity, and the guilt of that policy, which has, for nearly twenty years, systematically weakened and discouraged the former, while it meanly flattered and formidable aggrandized the latter? Here we have upon record the practical admission of the Whigs, and of their Roman Catholic attorney-general—one from which, we trust, they shall never be suffered to escape—that the supremacy of British

law in this country is actually maintained by and depends upon, the loyalty of Irish PROTESTANTS. We shall not dispute about terms; they may call it a "curious coincidence," or even an *unaccountable* one, if they will, but a FACT it nevertheless unquestionably is—a fact practically admitted, beyond the power of retractation, by the government themselves, and patent in the contrasted results of the two first and of the last of these three important prosecutions.

To the heavy responsibilities of the government, not only in connexion with the individual fate of John Mitchel, but also in reference to the existing state of Ireland, we must once more allude. To the cowardly deference to Roman Catholic disaffection, which has so uniformly characterized the Whigs, is attributable that policy of procrastination which has ended in making Mitchel a felon, his wife bereaved, and his children fatherless—all rather than enforce *at once* the milder law of sedition, to which four months since the now ruined convict was amenable—and this is mercy! To this dilatory policy is also attributable the alarming fact that the doctrines of revolution have gradually acquired a footing and created a school in Ireland, to an extent which threatens a repetition of many such stern and melancholy scenes as that which has closed the turbulent career of John Mitchel, and the possibility, too, of far more awful consequences in perspective. "I shall say no more (were the last words of Mitchel, while standing in the dock) than that all through this business, from the first, I have acted under a strong sense of duty, and that I will not repent of anything I have done. I do believe the course I have opened is only commenced. The Roman saw his hand burning into ashes, and could promise for three hundred who were ready to follow his example. Can I not promise for one, for two, for three——" Here the court interrupted him, and he was removed. But Mitchel has not promised, we venture to predict, in vain. He has had an uninterrupted mission of four months, and leaves, too probably many disciples behind him.

THE IRISH LEAGUE.

We carefully distinguished in our last number between the ostensible leaders of the Confederation and those sincere disciples whom, we conjectured, Mitchel had left behind him. We said a month ago—

"Among those with whom the public is as yet acquainted, there is no man to take his place. Others as yet unknown, indeed, there possibly—nay (judging from some indications we have seen), even *probably* may be—*clèves* of his austere and reckless school—who are willing and able to fill the vacant post, and prepared to devote themselves to civil extinction with the same stoical fanaticism.

"But Mitchel has not promised, we venture to predict, in vain. He has had an uninterrupted mission of four months, and leaves, too probably, many disciples behind him."

The publication of the *Irish Felon* (*felo de se?*) has justified our prediction. The same Fakir-like self-devotion—the same maniacal invective—the same dogged avowal of treasonable purpose, and hardy employment of treasonable incentive, which filled the columns of the *United Irishman*, characterize *its* pages too. Mitchel has not promised in vain. It remains to be seen whether the government will act in this case with merciful promptitude; or whether they will leave the *Irish Felon*, as they did his predecessor, to propagate treason and communism for a quarter of a year; and then at last, when general disorder, insurrectionary insolence, and mercantile panic have supervened, visit the consequences of their own guilty hesitation, with accumulated and dire severity, upon the fanatical journalist.

We predicted that, among the recognized leaders of the "Confederation," there was not one to take the place of John Mitchel. The result has justi-

fied our prophecy. The ostensible chiefs of the movement, which the "*United Irishman*" *alone*, in reality, led, have all, with inglorious precipitation, availed themselves of his disappearance to retire from the dangerous prominence into which the constraint of his example had dragged them. He had constantly presented to the public gaze a living type of sincerity and daring, which they, at their own proper peril, were forced to imitate. He not only mortified their vanity, but terrified their selfishness; and to them, consequently, his removal has been a blest relief. This is obvious, from the entire and almost instantaneous change which has since marked their policy—

"Grim-visaged WAR hath smoothed his wrinkled front."

Mr. Smith O'Brien has learned that "the central organization ought to expose itself as little as possible to the penal operation of iniquitous laws."* Safety has become the admitted principle of the body—and the committee thunder their defiance under the advice of counsel. Nor has the change stopped here. This might naturally be attributed to the terror of Mitchel's punishment, operating upon men of average timidity and prudence. We do not blame them for even an excess of caution, however we may smile at their boasted contempt of personal consequences. But to this negative modification of their system they have superadded a *positive* movement, indicative of principles far less respectable than prudence, carried even to the verge of pusillanimity. John Mitchel has scarcely cleared the mouth of Cork harbour when his associates are deep in the details of a negotiation with the authors of the celebrated "peace-resolutions." His departure is the signal for a compromise; or, if you will, a reconciliation between the "Confederates" and the Old Ireland Repealers on Burgh-quay; and although Mr. John O'Connell has recorded his solemn protest against this union (as against the other), the basis of "THE LEAGUE" is (we believe), while we write, definitively settled. Now, we have no hesitation in saying, that three weeks before John Mitchel was convicted, the council of the Confederation *dared* not have opened such a treaty.

In the first place, there exists an irreconcileable disagreement between the Young and the Old Ireland party, upon the only practical question with which repealers have to deal—the selection of the course by which they propose to reach their ultimate object: "Old Ireland" insists upon constitutional means—Young Ireland scouts them. One recommends petitions—the other, pikes—and each party obstinately persists in its own policy. How, then, are they to coalesce, without a shabby compromise of principle? One side or the other must yield, as soon as the League begins to *work*—and we suspect the tendency of the adjustment will not be to increase the perils of the composers of the peace-resolutions. But there are other obstacles in the way. Where very gross abuse has been exchanged—where direct charges of mendacity, cowardice, and peculation, have been recriminated—where accusations involving great moral baseness have been publicly, deliberately and reiteratedly bandied to and fro between any two men, or two sets of men, there is nothing very creditable in an extemporaneous return to intimacy, unaccompanied by previous apology or retractation. The silence of the criminators and *re*criminators leaves us to believe that each party holds the same vile opinion of the other's honour and morals, which a short time since they so grossly expressed. It seems odd that gentlemen should desire to be associated with "swindlers," "hypocrites," "poltroons," &c.—and no less strange that pure patriots should choose to admit "veteran peculators" to the handling of the people's money, and "notorious corruptionists" to the management of their political interests. It is very plain, either that the Confederates did not believe one word of the opprobrious charges which they preferred against the moderates of Conciliation Hall, and *vice versâ*, or else that they are marvellously lax indeed in the choice of their companions. In public estimation, the Young Ireland party have lost themselves, we believe irretrievably, by this unworthy step.

The motives which have induced the sudden fraternization of these habitual

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* Mr. W. Smith O'Brien's Letter announcing his adhesion to "the League."

recipients of each other's abuse, are frankly enough avowed, upon one side at least. Mr. John O'Connell, in announcing the project to his Conciliation Hall audience, plainly said that the association had lost the confidence of the people, and added that the "rent" was not sufficient to defray the current expenses of the establishment. The Confederates, upon the other hand, declared that *their* influence was restricted to the towns, and that by a junction with the Old Ireland party, they would gain the *country*. They forgot, in their anxiety to fabricate a good excuse for a gross inconsistency, Mr. John O'Connell's previous admission, that the Old Ireland establishment had lost the confidence of the people *altogether*. Thus it is admitted, and the admission is important, that the agitation, of which Conciliation Hall was the centre, is absolutely lifeless, and that of which the Confederate Council is the organ, subsists only in "the towns." The repeal agitation, therefore, at present musters only the town mobs and the Roman Catholic priests—a happy combination of the piety and intelligence of the country!

But the true motives of the Confederates lay a little deeper than those they avowed. The transportation of Mitchel had a double effect upon that august body; it relieved them of the presence of a task-master, and it frightened them thoroughly. There was no longer any one to prevent their coalescing with the "Association," and there was every reason, on the other hand, to render moderation desirable. Besides, something was wanted to fill an awkward pause in the agitation—something in the way of bustle and pageant, to divert attention from the depressing fact, that the movement had actually retroceded, *per saltum*, precisely to the point at which Mitchel had taken it up five months ago! A junction of the two rival institutions was precisely the thing required. The mob were amused with the *strenua inertia* of conferences, and speeches, and reports, while the tempered tone of Young Ireland's oratory, instead of being taken for a symptom of selfish trepidation, was applauded as a graceful deference to the prejudices of their new allies.

The organization of the clubs proceeds. Mitchel promised an insurrection as soon as the harvest should have been got in. But Mr. Smith O'Brien has cautiously *un*fixed the time for action. He names no day, no *year*; but declares, that *as soon as the organization shall be completed*, he will *then* proceed to decisive measures. The reader may perhaps inquire, at what point this condition will have been satisfied. Mr. O'Brien has not left us to grope in uncertainty. The organization will have been completed as soon as there are one thousand clubs, with three hundred men properly armed in each, and not sooner! In other words, until Mr. O'Brien finds himself, we will not say at the head, but in the rear of a disciplined and well-armed force of three hundred thousand men, he cannot be called upon to redeem his pledge, and give the word to advance. But although we unhesitatingly admit the practical adjournment *sine die* (by this clumsy but effectual device) of Mr. Smith O'Brien's own personal share in the dangers of insurrection, we are far from believing the foundation of such bodies as these rebellious clubs anything but a work of serious danger and positive mischief. Though three hundred thousand men are out of the question—fifty, sixty, or even a hundred thousand may possibly be got together. It is plainly possible that the organization may reach one-fourth or even one-third of the numerical strength stipulated for by Mr. O'Brien. Such a body, comprising, as it necessarily would, the dregs of the folly, wretchedness, and crime, of the very worst districts of Ireland, would speedily become unmanageable, and, conscious of their own formidable numbers, would not submit to the uniform and never-ending pressure of the Confederate curb. In constructing this system of clubs, the council are creating a portentous machinery, which they have no power to control. They are playing with elements of whose true nature they know nothing, and whose explosion, come when it may, will terrify, perhaps destroy them.

It would be incompatible with the brevity of this article, to enter upon a review of the too-sadly instructive history of the old Repeal Association, or into an examination of the scandalous abuses of which it was the den. We extract, however, from a contemporary journal, the following brief comment upon one salient topic in the speeches

of the Irish Confederates, at their meeting on the 21st ultimo:—

"In the course of the proceedings last night it was stated that the total receipts of the Confederation, from the date of its foundation on the 15th of February, 1847, have, to the present day, been £916 18s. 1d., of which £400 was contributed by about one hundred of the more active members, and the remaining £500 only by the country at large. In the same period the rival establishment has levied off the country fully £2,500, and yet not one farthing left! This statement proves the cost at which an energetic and spirited agitation may be really carried on. It shows that the Confederates supported theirs at a yearly cost of some £400, levied off the country. How, then, are the swindled people to account for the disappearance of such sums as £2,000 a-*week*?—at which figure, for a year and more during the agitation of '42-3, the repeal rent remained nearly fixed. These facts are eloquent, and the popular organs are bound to state them fairly."

The *Freeman's Journal* (one of the repeal organs in Dublin) has corrected an inaccuracy into which we were betrayed, in our necessarily hurried article upon "the state prosecutions" in the last number of this magazine. Our analysis of the ingredients of the jury, and the dissentients in Mr. Smith O'Brien's case, was, as we learned when it was too late to correct the error, inaccurate.* With respect to Mr. Meagher's case, however, we relied upon the statement of one of the jurors, addressed in open court to the Chief Justice, when discharging the jury—"My lord," said he, "we are eleven to one, and that one is a Roman Catholic." Behind this statement we do not feel ourselves warranted in going. We regret the mistake to which we have alluded; but know not to whom an apology is due. We certainly owe none to the repealers. We cited what we relied upon as facts, to illustrate an admission obviously involved in the universal complaint of all repeal authorities of every degree. We designed merely to point the great truth for which they, one and all, by necessary implication, contend. Mr. Mitchel's jury, they insist, was a *packed* one. And why is it pronounced a packed jury? Because, say they, no Roman Catholic was permitted to serve upon it. Had he been tried by a jury that was *not* packed, they continue (that is, by a jury *having* a Roman Catholic upon it), he would not have been convicted at all. Now, what is the basis of the argument, if it be not a distinct assumption that *Roman Catholic jurors generally* will not convict in prosecutions for political offences. It is an admission that a Roman Catholic would not have convicted, even in such a case as Mitchel's—a case of guilt so desperately clear, that able counsel practically abandoned his defence—and leaving him to consequences, against which no conceivable subtlety, or power of advocacy could possibly have opposed an obstacle—consequences that were constitutionally inevitable—launched his scathing declamation only against the government who arraigned him. The complaint is founded upon this position — and every repealer who makes it, subscribes to the truth of the assumption—Mitchel's conviction is charged as the consequence of the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the jury-box—and that by the Roman Catholic party themselves! We leave our English readers to gather from this fact, how far we were justified in pronouncing that the supremacy of British law, and the practical existence of the constitution here, depend upon the conscientious loyalty of Irish Protestants—a loyalty which has passed the ordeal of fearful vicissitudes—which has withstood the shocks of civil commotion—and worse—the spurning of insolence, and the coldness of neglect—a loyalty, above all, which is impervious to the secret and mortal poison of casuist tongues—which cannot be seduced by the fraudulent subtleties, or overpowered by the exorbitant tyranny of a dark and sinister theology.

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* The *Freeman's Journal* states that there were three Roman Catholics upon this jury, and that one of them only was dissentient, in common with a *Protestant* repealer, from a verdict of guilty, upon which the other jurors had unanimously agreed.

THE MYSTERIOUS LODGER.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

About the year 1822 I resided in a comfortable and roomy old house, the exact locality of which I need not particularise, further than to say that it was not very far from Old Brompton, in the immediate neighbourhood, or rather continuity (as even my Connemara readers perfectly well know), of the renowned city of London.

Though this house was roomy and comfortable, as I have said, it was not, by any means, a handsome one. It was composed of dark red brick, with small windows, and thick white sashes; a porch, too—none of your flimsy trellis-work, but a solid projection of the same vermillion masonry—surmounted by a leaded balcony, with heavy, half-rotten balustrades, darkened the hall-door with a perennial gloom. The mansion itself stood in a walled enclosure, which had, perhaps, from the date of the erection itself, been devoted to shrubs and flowers. Some of the former had grown there almost to the dignity of trees; and two dark little yews stood at each side of the porch, like swart and inauspicious dwarfs, guarding the entrance of an enchanted castle. Not that my domicile in any respect deserved the comparison: it had no reputation as a haunted house; if it ever had any ghosts, nobody remembered them. Its history was not known to me: it may have witnessed plots, cabals, and forgeries, bloody suicides and cruel murders. It was certainly old enough to have become acquainted with iniquity; a small stone slab, under the balustrade, and over the arch of the porch I mentioned, had the date 1672, and a half-effaced coat of arms, which I might have deciphered any day, had I taken the trouble to get a ladder, but always put it off. All I can say for the house is, that it was well stricken in years, with a certain air of sombre comfort about it; contained a vast number of rooms and closets; and, what was of far greater importance, was got by me a dead bargain.

Its individuality attracted me. I grew fond of it for itself, and for its associations, until other associations of a hateful kind first disturbed, and then destroyed, their charm. I forgave its dull red brick, and pinched white windows, for the sake of the beloved and cheerful faces within: its ugliness was softened by its age; and its sombre evergreens, and moss-grown stone flower-pots, were relieved by the brilliant hues of a thousand gay and graceful flowers that peeped among them, or nodded over the grass.

Within that old house lay my life's treasure! I had a darling little girl of nine, and another little darling—a boy—just four years of age; and dearer, unspeakably, than either—a wife—the prettiest, gayest, best little wife in all London. When I tell you that our income was scarcely £380 a-year, you will perceive that our establishment cannot have been a magnificent one; yet, I do assure you, we were more comfortable than a great many lords, and happier, I dare say, than the whole peerage put together.

This happiness was not, however, what it ought to have been. The reader will understand at once, and save me a world of moralising circumlocution, when he learns, bluntly and nakedly, that, among all my comforts and blessings, I was an infidel.

I had not been without religious training; on the contrary, more than average pains had been bestowed upon my religious instruction from my earliest childhood. My father, a good, plain, country clergyman, had worked hard to make me as good as himself; and had succeeded, at least, in training me in godly habits. He died, however, when I was but twelve years of age; and fate had long before deprived me of the gentle care of a mother. A boarding-school, followed by a college life, where nobody having any very direct interest in realising in my behalf the ancient blessing, that in fulness of time I should "die a good old man," I was left very much to my own devices, which, in truth, were none of the best.

Among these were the study of Voltaire, Tom Paine, Hume, Shelly, and the whole school of infidels, poetical as

well as prose. This pursuit, and the all but blasphemous vehemence with which I gave myself up to it, was, perhaps, partly reactionary. A somewhat injudicious austerity and precision had indissolubly associated in my childish days the ideas of restraint and gloom with religion. I bore it a grudge; and so, when I became thus early my own master, I set about paying off, after my own fashion, the old score I owed it. I was besides, like every other young infidel whom it has been my fate to meet, a conceited coxcomb. A smattering of literature, without any real knowledge, and a great assortment of all the cut-and-dry flippancies of the school I had embraced, constituted my intellectual stock in trade. I was, like most of my school of philosophy, very proud of being an unbeliever; and fancied myself, in the complacency of my wretched ignorance, at an immeasurable elevation above the church-going, Bible-reading herd, whom I treated with a good-humoured superciliousness which I thought vastly indulgent.

My wife was an excellent little creature, and truly pious. She had married me in the full confidence that my levity was merely put on, and would at once give way before the influence she hoped to exert upon my mind. Poor little thing! she deceived herself. I allowed her, indeed, to do entirely as she pleased; but for myself, I carried my infidelity to the length of an absolute superstition. I made an ostentation of it. I would rather have been in a "hell" than in a church on Sunday; and though I did not prevent my wife's instilling her own principles into the minds of our children, I, in turn, took especial care to deliver mine upon all occasions in their hearing, by which means I trusted to sow the seeds of that unprejudiced scepticism in which I prided myself, at least as early as my good little partner dropped those of her own gentle "superstition" into their infant minds. Had I had my own absurd and impious will in this matter, my children should have had absolutely no religious education whatsoever, and been left wholly unshackled to choose for themselves among all existing systems, infidelity included, precisely as chance, fancy, or interest might hereafter determine.

It is not to be supposed that such a state of things did not afford her great uneasiness. Nevertheless, we were so very fond of one another, and in our humble way enjoyed so many blessings, that we were as entirely happy as any pair can be without the holy influence of religious sympathy.

But the even flow of prosperity which had for so long gladdened my little household was not destined to last for ever. It was ordained that I should experience the bitter truth of more than one of the wise man's proverbs, and first, especially, of that which declares that "he that hateth suretyship is sure." I found myself involved (as how many have been before) by a "d——d goodnatured friend," for more than two hundred pounds. This agreeable intelligence was conveyed to me in an attorney's letter, which, to obviate unpleasant measures, considerately advised my paying the entire amount within just one week of the date of his pleasant epistle. Had I been called upon within that time to produce the Pitt diamond, or to make title to the Buckingham estates, the demand would have been just as easily complied with.

I have no wish to bore my reader further with this little worry—a very serious one to me, however—and it will be enough to mention, that the kindness of a friend extricated me from the clutches of the law by a timely advance, which, however, I was bound to replace within two years. To enable me to fulfil this engagement, my wife and I, after repeated consultations, resolved upon the course which resulted in the odd and unpleasant consequences which form the subject of this narrative.

We resolved to advertise for a lodger, with or without board, &c.; and by resolutely submitting, for a single year, to the economy we had prescribed for ourselves, as well as to the annoyance of a stranger's intrusion, we calculated that at the end of that term we should have liquidated our debt.

Accordingly, without losing time, we composed an advertisement in the most tempting phraseology we could devise, consistently with that economic laconism which the cost per line in the columns of the *Times* newspaper imposes upon the rhetoric of the advertising public.

Somehow we were unlucky; for although we repeated our public notification three times in the course of a fortnight, we had but two applications. The one was from a clergyman in ill health—a man of great ability and zealous piety, whom we both knew by reputation, and who has since been called to his rest. My good little wife was very anxious that we should close with his offer, which was very considerably under what we had fixed upon; and I have no doubt that she was influenced by the hope that his talents and zeal might exert a happy influence upon my stubborn and unbelieving heart. For my part, his religious character displeased me. I did not wish my children's heads to be filled with mythic dogmas—for so I judged the doctrines of our holy faith—and instinctively wished him away. I therefore declined his offer; and I have often since thought not quite so graciously as I ought to have done. The other offer—if so it can be called—was so very inadequate that we could not entertain it.

I was now beginning to grow seriously uneasy—our little project, so far from bringing in the gains on which we had calculated, had put me considerably out of pocket; for, independently of the cost of the advertisement I have mentioned, there were sundry little expenses involved in preparing for the meet reception of our expected inmate, which, under ordinary circumstances, we should not have dreamed of. Matters were in this posture, when an occurrence took place which immediately revived my flagging hopes.

As we had no superfluity of servants, our children were early obliged to acquire habits of independence; and my little girl, then just nine years of age, was frequently consigned with no other care than that of her own good sense, to the companionship of a little band of playmates, pretty similarly circumstanced, with whom it was her wont to play. Having one fine summer afternoon gone out as usual with these little companions, she did not return quite so soon as we had expected her; when she did so, she was out of breath, and excited.

"Oh, papa," she said, "I have seen such a nice old, kind gentleman, and he told me to tell you that he has a particular friend who wants a lodging in a quiet place, and that he thinks your house would suit him exactly, and ever so much more; and, look here, he gave me this."

She opened her hand, and shewed me a sovereign.

"Well, this does looks promisingly," I said, my wife and I having first exchanged a smiling glance.

"And what kind of gentleman was he, dear?" inquired she. "Was he well dressed—whom was he like?"

"He was not like any one that I know, she answered; "but he had very nice new clothes on, and he was one of the fattest men I ever saw; and I am sure he is sick, for he looks very pale, and he had a crutch beside him."

"Dear me, how strange!" exclaimed my wife; though, in truth there was nothing very wonderful in the matter. "Go on, child," I said; "let us hear it all out."

"Well, papa, he had such an immense yellow waistcoat!—I never did see such a waistcoat," she resumed; "and he was sitting or leaning, I can't say which, against the bank of the green lane; I suppose to rest himself, for he seems very weak, poor gentleman!"

"And how did you happen to speak to him?" asked my wife.

"When we were passing by, none of us saw him at all; but I suppose he heard them talking to me, and saying my name; for he said, 'Fanny—little Fanny—so, that's your name—come here child, I have a question to ask you.'"

"And so you went to him?" I said.

"Yes," she continued, "he beckoned to me, and I did go over to him, but not very near, for I was greatly afraid of him at first."

"Afraid! dear, and why afraid?" asked I.

"I was afraid, because he looked very old, very frightful, and as if he would hurt me."

"What was there so old and frightful about him?" I asked.

She paused and reflected a little, and then said—

"His face was very large and pale, and it was looking upwards: it seemed very angry, I thought, but maybe it was angry from pain; and sometimes one side of it used to twitch and tremble for a minute, and then to grow uite still again; and all the time he

was speaking to me, he never looked at me once, but always kept his face and eyes turned upward ; but his voice was very soft, and he called me little Fanny, and gave me this pound to buy toys with ; so I was not so frightened in a little time, and then, he sent a long message to you, papa, and told me if I forgot it he would beat me ; but I knew he was only joking, so that did not frighten me either."

"And what was the message, my girl ?" I asked, patting her pretty head with my hand.

"Now, let me remember it all," she said, reflectively ; "for he told it to me twice. He asked me if there was a good bedroom at the top of the house, standing by itself—and you know there is, so I told him so ; it was exactly the kind of room that he described. And then he said that his friend would pay two hundred pounds a-year for that bedroom, his board and attendance ; and he told me to ask you, and have your answer when he should next meet me.

"Two hundred pounds !" ejaculated my poor little wife ; "why that is nearly twice as much as we expected."

"But did he say that his friend was sick, or very old ; or that he had any servant to be supported also ?" I asked.

"Oh ! no ; he told me that he was quite able to take care of himself, and that he had, I think he called it, an asthma, but nothing else the matter ; and that he would give no trouble at all, and that any friend who came to see him, he would see, not in the house, but only in the garden."

"In the garden !" I echoed, laughing in spite of myself.

"Yes, indeed he said so ; and he told me to say that he would pay one hundred pounds when he came here, and the next hundred in six months, and so on," continued she.

"Oh, ho ! half-yearly, in advance—better and better," said I.

"And he bid me say, too, if you should ask about his character, that he is just as good as the master of the house himself," she added ; "and when he said that, he laughed a little."

"Why, if he gives us a hundred pounds in advance," I answered, turning to my wife, "we are safe enough ; for he will not find half that value in plate and jewels in the entire household, if he is disposed to rob us. So I see no reason against closing with the offer, should it be seriously meant—do you, dear ?"

"Quite the contrary, love," said she. I think it most desirable—indeed, most *providential.*"

"Providential ! my dear little bigot !" I repeated, with a smile. "Well, be it so. I call it *lucky* merely ; but, perhaps, you are happier in your faith, than I in my philosophy. Yes, you are *grateful* for the chance that I only rejoice at. You receive it as a proof of a divine and tender love—I as an accident. Delusions are often more elevating than truth."

And so saying, I kissed away the saddened cloud that for a moment overcast her face.

"Papa, he bid me be sure to have an answer for him when we meet again," resumed the child. "What shall I say to him when he asks me ?"

"Say that we agree to his proposal, my dear—or stay," I said, addressing my wife, "may it not be prudent to reduce what the child says to writing, and accept the offer so ? This will prevent misunderstanding, as she may possibly have made some mistake."

My wife agreed, and I wrote a brief note, stating that I was willing to receive an inmate upon the terms recounted by little Fanny, and which I distinctly specified, so that no mistake could possibly arise owing to the vagueness of what lawyers term a parole agreement. This important memorandum I placed in the hands of my little girl, who was to deliver it whenever the old gentleman in the yellow waistcoat should chance to meet her. And all these arrangements completed, I awaited the issue of the affair with as much patience as I could affect. Meanwhile, my wife and I talked it over incessantly ; and she, good little soul, almost wore herself to death in settling and unsettling the furniture and decorations of our expected inmate's apartments. Days passed away—days of hope deferred, tedious and anxious. We were beginning to despond again, when one morning our little girl ran into the breakfast-parlour, more excited even than she had been before, and fresh from a new interview with the gentleman in the yellow waistcoat. She had encountered him suddenly, pretty

nearly where she had met him before, and the result was, that he had read the little note I have mentioned, and desired the child to inform me that his friend, *Mr. Smith*, would take possession of the apartments I proposed setting, on the terms agreed between us, that very evening.

"This evening!" exclaimed my wife and I sumultaneously—*I* full of the idea of making a first instalment on the day following; *she*, of the hundred-and-one preparations which still remained to be completed.

"And so Smith is his name! Well, that does not tell us much," said I; "but where did you meet your fat friend on this occasion, and how long is it since?"

"Near the corner of the wall-flower lane (so we indicated one which abounded in these fragrant plants); he was leaning with his back against the old tree you cut my name on, and his crutch was under his arm."

"But how long ago?" I urged.

"Only this moment; I ran home as fast as I could," she replied.

"Why, you little blockhead, you should have told me that at first," I cried, snatching up my hat, and darting away in pursuit of the yellow waistcoat, whose acquaintance I not unnaturally coveted, inasmuch as a man who, for the first time, admits a stranger into his house, on the footing of permanent residence, desires generally to know a little more about him than that his name is Smith.

The place indicated was only, as we say, a step away; and as yellow-waistcoat was fat, and used a crutch, I calculated on easily overtaking him. I was, however, disappointed; crutch, waistcoat, and all had disappeared. I climbed to the top of the wall, and from this commanding point of view made a sweeping observation—but in vain. I returned home, cursing my ill-luck, the child's dulness, and the fat old fellow's activity.

I need hardly say that Mr. Smith, in all his aspects, moral, social, physical, and monetary, formed a fruitful and interesting topic of speculation during dinner. How many phantom Smiths, short and long, stout and lean, ill-tempered and well-tempered—rich, respectable, or highly dangerous merchants, spies, forgers, nabobs, swindlers, danced before us, in the endless mazes of fanciful conjecture, during that anxious *tête-à-tête*, which was probably to be interrupted by the arrival of the gentleman himself.

My wife and I puzzled over the problem as people would over the possible *denouement* of a French novel; and at last, by mutual consent, we came to the conclusion that Smith could, and would turn out to be no other than the good-natured valetudinarian in the yellow waistcoat himself, a humorist, as was evident enough, and a millionaire, as we unhesitatingly pronounced, who had no immediate relatives, and as I hoped, and my wife "was certain," taken a decided fancy to our little Fanny; I patted the child's head with something akin to pride, as I thought of the magnificent, though remote possibilities, in store for her.

Meanwhile, hour after hour stole away. It was a beautiful autumn evening, and the amber lustre of the declining sun fell softly upon the yews and flowers, and gave an air, half melancholy, half cheerful, to the dark-red brick piers surmounted with their cracked and grass-grown stone urns, and furnished with the light foliage of untended creeping plants. Down the short broad walk leading to this sombre entrance, my eye constantly wandered; but no impatient rattle on the latch, no battering at the gate, indicated the presence of a visiter, and the lazy bell hung dumbly among the honey-suckles.

"When will he come? Yellow waistcoat promised *this evening!* It has been evening a good hour and a half, and yet he is not here. When will he come? It will soon be dark—the evening will have passed—will he come at all?"

Such were the uneasy speculations which began to trouble us. Redder and duskier grew the light of the setting sun, till it saddened into the mists of night. Twilight came, and then darkness, and still no arrival, no summons at the gate. I would not admit even to my wife the excess of my own impatience. I could, however, stand it no longer; so I took my hat and walked to the gate, where I stood by the side of the public road, watching every vehicle and person that approached, in a fever of expectation. Even these, however,

began to fail me, and the road grew comparatively quiet and deserted. Having kept guard like a sentinel for more than half an hour, I returned in no very good humour, with the punctuality of an expected inmate—ordered the servant to draw the curtains and secure the hall-door ; and so my wife and I sate down to our disconsolate cup of tea. It must have been about ten o'clock, and we were both sitting silently—she working, I looking moodily into a paper—and neither of us any longer entertaining a hope that anything but disappointment would come of the matter, when a sudden tapping, very loud and sustained, upon the window pane, startled us both in an instant from our reveries.

I am not sure whether I mentioned before that the sitting-room we occupied was upon the ground-floor, and the sward came close under the window. I drew the curtains, and opened the shutters with revived hope ; and looking out, saw a very tall thin figure, a good deal wrapped up, standing about a yard before me, and motioning with head and hand impatiently towards the hall-door. Though the night was clear, there was no moon, and therefore I could see no more than the black outline, like that of an *ombre chinoise* figure, signing to me with mop and moe. In a moment I was at the hall-door, candle in hand ; the stranger stept in—his long fingers clutched in the handle of a valise, and a bag which trailed upon the ground behind him.

The light fell full upon him. He wore a long, ill-made, black surtout, buttoned across, and which wrinkled and bagged about his lank figure ; his hat was none of the best, and rather broad in the brim ; a sort of white woollen muffler enveloped the lower part of his face ; a pair of prominent green goggles, fenced round with leather, completely concealed his eyes ; and nothing of the genuine man, but a little bit of yellow forehead, and a small transverse segment of equally yellow cheek and nose, encountered the curious gaze of your humble servant.

" You are—I suppose"—I began ; for I really was a little doubtful about my man.

" Mr. Smith—the same ; be good enough to show me to my bed-chamber," interrupted the stranger, brusquely, and in a tone which, spite of the muffler that enveloped his mouth, was sharp and grating enough.

" Ha !—Mr. Smith—so I supposed. I hope you may find everything as comfortable as we desire to make it——"

I was about making a speech, but was cut short by a slight bow, and a decisive gesture of the hand in the direction of the staircase. It was plain that the stranger hated ceremony.

Together, accordingly, we mounted the staircase ; he still pulling his luggage after him, and striding lightly up without articulating a word ; and on reaching his bedroom, he immediately removed his hat, showing a sinister, black scratch-wig underneath, and then began unrolling the mighty woollen wrapping of his mouth and chin.

" Come," thought I," we *shall* see something of your face after all."

This something, however, proved to be very little ; for under his muffler was a loose cravat, which stood up in front of his chin and upon his mouth, he wore a respirator—an instrument which I had never seen before, and of the use of which I was wholly ignorant.

There was something so excessively odd in the effect of this piece of unknown mechanism upon his mouth, surmounted by the huge goggles which encased his eyes, that I believe I should have laughed outright, were it not for a certain unpleasant and peculiar impressiveness in the *tout ensemble* of the narrow-chested, long-limbed, and cadaverous figure in black. As it was, we stood looking at one another in silence for several seconds.

" Thank you, sir," at last he said, abruptly. " I shan't want anything whatever to-night ; if you can only spare me this candle."

I assented ; and, becoming more communicative, he added—

" I am, though an invalid, an independent sort of fellow enough. I am a bit of a philsopher ; I am my own servant, and, I hope, my own master, too. I rely upon myself in matters of the body and of the mind. I place valets and priests in the same category—fellows who live by our laziness, intellectual or corporeal. I am a

Voltaire, without his luxuries—a Robinson Crusoe, without his Bible—an anchorite, without a superstition—in short, my indulgence is asceticism, and my faith infidelity. Therefore, I shan't disturb your servants much with my bell, nor yourselves with my psalmody. You have got a rational lodger, who knows how to attend upon himself."

During this singular address he was drawing off his ill-fitting black gloves, and when he had done so, a bank-note, which had been slipped underneath for safety, remained in his hand.

"Punctuality, sir, is one of my poor pleasures," he said; "will you allow me to enjoy it now? To-morrow you may acknowledge this; I should not rest were you to decline it."

He extended his bony and discoloured fingers, and placed the note in my hand. Oh, Fortune and Plutus! it was a £100 bank-note.

"Pray, not one word, my dear sir," he continued, unbending still further; "it is simply done pursuant to agreement. We shall know one another better, I hope, in a little time; you will find me always equally punctual. At present pray give yourself no further trouble; I require nothing more. Good night."

I returned the valediction, closed his door, and groped my way down the stairs. It was not until I had nearly reached the hall, that I recollected that I had omitted to ask our new inmate at what hour he would desire to be called in the morning, and so I groped my way back again. As I reached the lobby on which his chamber opened, I perceived a long line of light issuing from the partially-opened door, within which stood Mr. Smith, the same odd figure I had just left; while along the boards was creeping towards him across the lobby, a great, big-headed, buff-coloured cat. I had never seen this ugly animal before; and it had reached the threshold of his door, arching its back, and rubbing itself on the post, before either appeared conscious of my approach, when, with an angry growl, it sprang into the stranger's room.

"What do you want?" he demanded, sharply, standing in the doorway.

I explained my errand.

"I shall call myself," was his sole reply; and he shut the door with a crash that indicated no very pleasurable emotions.

I cared very little about my lodger's temper. The stealthy rustle of his bank-note in my waistcoat pocket was music enough to sweeten the harshest tones of his voice, and to keep alive a cheerful goodhumour in my heart; and although there was, indisputably, something queer about him, I was, on the whole, very well pleased with my bargain.

The next day our new inmate did not ring his bell until noon. As soon as he had had some breakfast, of which he very sparingly partook, he told the servant that, for the future, he desired that a certain quantity of milk and bread might be left outside his door; and this being done, he would dispense with regular meals. He desired, too, that, on my return, I should be acquainted that he wished to see me in his own room at about nine o'clock; and, meanwhile, he directed that he should be left undisturbed.

I found my little wife full of astonishment at Mr. Smith's strange frugality and seclusion, and very curious to learn the object of the interview he had desired with me. At nine o'clock I repaired to his room.

I found him in precisely the costume in which I had left him—the same green goggles—the same muffling of the mouth, except that being now no more than a broadly-folded black silk handkerchief, very loose, and covering even the lower part of the nose, it was more obviously intended for the sole purpose of concealment. It was plain I was not to see more of his features than he had chosen to disclose at our first interview. The effect was as if the lower part of his face had some hideous wound or sore. He closed the door with his own hand on my entrance, nodded slightly, and took his seat. I expected him to begin, but he was so long silent that I was at last constrained to address him.

I said, for want of something more to the purpose, that I hoped he had not been tormented by the strange cat the night before.

"What cat?" he asked, abruptly; "what the plague do you mean?"

"Why, I certainly did see a cat go into your room last night," I resumed.

"Hey, and what if you did—though I fancy you dreamed it—I'm not afraid

of a cat; are you?" he interrupted, tartly.

At this moment there came a low growling mew from the closet which opened from the room in which we sat.

"Talk of the devil," said I, pointing towards the closet. My companion, without any exact change of expression, looked, I thought, somehow still more sinister and lowering; and I felt for a moment a sort of superstitious misgiving, which made the rest of the sentence die away on my lips.

Perhaps Mr. Smith perceived this, for he said, in a tone calculated to reassure me—

"Well, sir, I think I am bound to tell you that I like my apartments very well; they suit me, and I shall probably be your tenant for much longer than at first you anticipated."

I expressed my gratification.

He then began to talk, something in the strain in which he had spoken of his own peculiarities of habit and thinking upon the previous evening. He disposed of all classes and denominations of superstition with an easy sarcastic slang, which for me was so captivating, that I soon lost all reserve, and found myself listening and suggesting by turns—acquiescent and pleased—sometimes hazarding dissent; but whenever I did, foiled and floored by a few pointed satirical sentences, whose sophistry, for such I must now believe it, confounded me with a rapidity which, were it not for the admiration with which he had insensibly inspired me, would have piqued and irritated my vanity not a little.

While this was going on, from time to time the mewing and growling of a cat within the closet became more and more audible. At last these sounds became so loud, accompanied by scratching at the door, that I paused in the midst of a sentence, and observed—

"There certainly is a cat shut up in the closet?"

"Is there?" he ejaculated, in a surprised tone; "nay, I do not hear it."

He rose abruptly and approached the door; his back was towards me, but I observed he raised the goggles which usually covered his eyes, and looked steadfastly at the closet door. The angry sounds all died away into a low, protracted growl, which again subsided into silence. He continued in the same attitude for some moments, and then returned.

"I do not hear it," he said, as he resumed his place, and taking a book from his capacious pocket, asked me if I had seen it before? I never had, and this surprised me, for I had flattered myself that I knew, at least by name, every work published in England during the last fifty years in favour of that philosophy in which we both delighted. The book, moreover, was an odd one, as both its title and table of contents demonstrated.

While we were discoursing upon these subjects, I became more and more distinctly conscious of a new class of sounds proceeding from the same closet. I plainly heard a measured and heavy tread, accompanied by the tapping of some hard and heavy substance like the end of a staff, pass up and down the floor—first, as it seemed, stealthily, and then more and more unconcealedly. I began to feel very uncomfortable and suspicious. As the noise proceeded, and became more and more unequivocal, Mr. Smith abruptly rose, opened the closet door, just enough to admit his own lath-like person, and steal within the threshold for some seconds. What he did I could not see—I felt conscious he had an associate concealed there; and though my eyes remained fixed on the book, I could not avoid listening for some audible words, or signal of caution. I heard, however, nothing of the kind. Mr. Smith turned back—walked a step or two towards me, and said—

"I fancied I heard a sound from that closet, but there is nothing—nothing—nothing whatever; bring the candle, let us both look."

I obeyed with some little trepidation, for I fully anticipated that I should detect the intruder, of whose presence my own ears had given me, for nearly half an hour, the most unequivocal proofs. We entered the closet together; it contained but a few chairs and a small spider table. At the far end of the room there was a sort of grey woollen cloth upon the floor, and a bundle of something underneath it. I looked jealously at it, and half thought I could trace the outline of a human figure; but, if so, it was perfectly motionless.

"Some of my poor wardrobe," he muttered, as he pointed his lean finger in the direction. "It did not sound like a cat, did it—hey—did it?" he muttered; and without attending to my answer, he went about the apartment, clapping his hands, and crying, "Hish—hish—hish!"

The game, however, whatever it was, did not start. As I entered I had seen, however, a large crutch reposing against the wall in the corner opposite to the door. This was the only article in the room, except that I have mentioned, with which I was not familiar. With the exception of our two selves, there was not a living creature to be seen there; no shadow but ours upon the bare walls; no feet but our own upon the comfortless floor.

I had never before felt so strange and unpleasant a sensation.

"There is nothing unusual in the room but that crutch," I said.

"What crutch, you dolt? I see no crutch," he ejaculated, in a tone of sudden but suppressed fury.

"Why, *that* crutch," I answered (for somehow I neither felt nor resented his rudeness), turning and pointing to the spot where I had seen it. It was gone!—it was neither there nor anywhere else. It must have been an illusion—rather an odd one, to be sure. And yet I could at this moment, with a safe conscience, *swear* that I never saw an object more distinctly than I had seen it but a second before.

My companion was muttering fast to himself as we withdrew; his presence rather scared than reassured me; and I felt something almost amounting to horror, as, holding the candle above his cadaverous and sable figure, he stood at his threshold, while I descended the stairs, and said, in a sort of whisper—

"Why, but that I am, like yourself, a philosopher, I should say that your house is—is—a—ha! ha! ha—HAUNTED!"

"You look very pale, my love," said my wife, as I entered the drawing-room, where she had been long awaiting my return. "Nothing unpleasant has happened?"

"Nothing, nothing, I assure you. Pale!—*do* I look pale?" I answered. "We are excellent friends, I assure you. So far from having had the smallest disagreement, there is every prospect of our agreeing but too well, as you will say; for I find that he holds all my opinions upon speculative subjects. We have had a great deal of conversation this evening, I assure you; and I never met, I think, so scholarlike and able a man."

"I am sorry for it, dearest," she said, sadly. "The greater his talents, if such be his opinions, the more dangerous a companion is he."

We turned, however, to more cheerful topics, and it was late before we retired to rest. I believe it was pride—perhaps only vanity—but, at all events, some obstructive and stubborn instinct of my nature, which I could not overcome—that prevented my telling my wife the odd occurrences which had disturbed my visit to our guest. I was unable or ashamed to confess that so slight a matter had disturbed me; and, above all, that any accident could possibly have clouded, even for a moment, the frosty clearness of my pure and lofty scepticism with the shadows of superstition.

Almost every day seemed to develop some new eccentricity of our strange guest. His dietary consisted, without any variety or relief, of the monotonous bread and milk with which he started; his bed had not been made for nearly a week; nobody had been admitted into his room since my visit, just described; and he never ventured down stairs, or out of doors, until after nightfall, when he used sometimes to glide swiftly round our little enclosed shrubbery, and at others stand quite motionless, composed, as if in an attitude of deep attention. After employing about an hour in this way, he would return, and steal up stairs to his room, when he would shut himself up, and not be seen again until the next night—or, it might be, the night after that—when, perhaps, he would repeat his odd excursion.

Strange as his habits were, their eccentricity was all upon the side least troublesome to us. He required literally no attendance; and as to his occasional night ramble, even *it* caused not the slightest disturbance of our routine hour for securing the house and locking up the halldoor for the night, inasmuch as he had invariably retired before that hour arrived.

All this stimulated curiosity, and, in no small degree, that of my wife, who, notwithstanding her vigilance and her anxiety to see our strange inmate, had been hitherto foiled by a series of cross accidents. We were sitting together somewhere about ten o'clock at night, when there came a tap at the room-door. We had just been discussing the unaccountable Smith; and I felt a sheepish consciousness that he might be himself at the door, and have possibly even overheard our speculations—some of them anything but complimentary, respecting himself.

"Come in," cried I, with an effort; and the tall form of our lodger glided into the room. My wife was positively frightened, and stood looking at him, as he advanced, with a stare of manifest apprehension, and even recoiled mechanically, and caught my hand.

Sensitiveness, however, was not his fault: he made a kind of stiff nod as I mumbled an introduction; and seating himself unasked, began at once to chat in that odd, off-hand, and sneering style, in which he excelled, and which had, as he wielded it, a sort of fascination of which I can pretend to convey no idea.

My wife's alarm subsided, and although she still manifestly felt some sort of misgiving about our visitor, she yet listened to his conversation, and, spite of herself, soon began to enjoy it. He stayed for nearly half an hour. But although he glanced at a great variety of topics, he did not approach the subject of religion. As soon as he was gone, my wife delivered judgment upon him in form. She admitted he was agreeable; but then he was such an unnatural, awful-looking object: there was, besides, something indescribably frightful, she thought, in his manner—the very tone of his voice was strange and hateful; and, on the whole, she felt unutterably relieved at his departure.

A few days after, on my return, I found my poor little wife agitated and dispirited. Mr. Smith had paid her a visit, and brought with him a book, which he stated he had been reading, and which contained some references to the Bible which he begged of her to explain in that profounder and less obvious sense in which they had been cited. This she had endeavoured to do; and affecting to be much gratified by her satisfactory exposition, he had requested her to reconcile some discrepancies which he said had often troubled him when reading the Scriptures. Some of them were quite new to my good little wife; they startled and even horrified her. He pursued this theme, still pretending only to seek for information to quiet his own doubts, while in reality he was sowing in her mind the seeds of the first perturbations that had ever troubled the sources of her peace. He had been with her, she thought, no more than a quarter of an hour; but he had contrived to leave her abundant topics on which to ruminate for days. I found her shocked and horrified at the doubts which this potent Magus had summoned from the pit—doubts which she knew not how to combat, and from the torment of which she could not escape.

"He has made me very miserable with his deceitful questions. I never thought of them before; and, merciful Heaven! I cannot answer them! What am I to do? My serenity is gone; I shall never be happy again."

In truth, she was so very miserable, and, as it seemed to me, so disproportionately excited, that, inconsistent in me as the task would have been, I would gladly have explained away her difficulties, and restored to her mind its wonted confidence and serenity, had I possessed sufficient knowledge for the purpose. I really pitied her, and heartily wished Mr. Smith, for the nonce, at the devil.

I observed after this that my wife's spirits appeared permanently affected. There was a constantly-recurring anxiety, and I thought something was lying still more heavily at her heart than the uncertainties inspired by our lodger.

One evening, as we two were sitting together, after a long silence, she suddenly laid her hand upon my arm, and said—

"Oh, Richard, my darling! would to God you could pray for me!"

There was something so agitated, and even terrified, in her manner, that I was absolutely startled. I urged her to disclose whatever preyed upon her mind.

"You can't sympathise with me—you can't help me—you can scarcely compassionate me in my misery! Oh,

dearest Richard! some evil influence has been gaining upon my heart, dulling and destroying my convictions, killing all my holy affections, and—and absolutely transforming me. I look inward upon myself with amazement, with terror—with—oh, God!—with actual despair!"

Saying this, she threw herself on her knees, and wept an agonised flood of tears, with her head reposing in my lap.

Poor little thing, my heart bled for her! But what could I do or say?

All I could suggest was what I really thought, that she was unwell—hysterical—and needed to take better care of her precious self; that her change of feeling was fancied, not real; and that a few days would restore her to her old health and former spirits and serenity.

"And sometimes," she resumed, after I had ended a consolatory discussion, which it was but too manifest had fallen unprofitably upon her ear, "such dreadful, impious thoughts come into my mind, whether I choose it or not; they come, and stay, and return, strive as I may; and I can't pray against them. They are forced upon me with the strength of an independent will; and oh!—horrible—frightful—they blaspheme the character of God himself. They upbraid the Almighty upon his throne, and I can't pray against them; there is something in me now that resists prayer."

There was such a real and fearful anguish in the agitation of my gentle companion, that it shook my very soul within me, even while I was affecting to make light of her confessions. I had never before witnessed a struggle at all like this, and I was awe-struck at the spectacle.

At length she became comparatively calm. I did gradually succeed, though very imperfectly, in reassuring her. She strove hard against her depression, and recovered a little of her wonted cheerfulness.

After a while, however, the cloud returned. She grew sad and earnest, though no longer excited; and entreated, or rather implored, of me to grant her one special favour, and this was, to avoid the society of our lodger.

"I never," she said, "could understand till now the instinctive dread with which poor Margaret, in Faust, shrinks from the hateful presence of Mephistopheles. I now feel it in myself. The dislike and suspicion I first felt for that man—Smith, or whatever else he may call himself—has grown into literal detestation and terror. I hate him—I am afraid of him—I never knew what anguish of mind was until he entered our doors; and would to God—would to God he were gone."

I reasoned with her—kissed her—laughed at her; but could not dissipate, in the least degree, the intense and preternatural horror with which she had grown to regard the poor philosophic invalid, who was probably, at that moment, poring over some metaphysical book in his solitary bedchamber.

The circumstance I am about to mention will give you some notion of the extreme to which these excited feelings had worked upon her nerves. I was that night suddenly awakened by a piercing scream—I started upright in the bed, and saw my wife standing at the bedside, white as ashes with terror. It was some seconds, so startled was I, before I could find words to ask her the cause of her affright. She caught my wrist in her icy grasp, and climbed, trembling violently, into bed. Notwithstanding my repeated entreaties, she continued for a long time stupified and dumb. At length, however, she told me, that having lain awake for a long time, she felt, on a sudden, that she could pray, and lighting the candle, she had stolen from beside me, and kneeled down for the purpose. She had, however, scarcely assumed the attitude of prayer, when somebody, she said, clutched her arm violently near the wrist, and she heard, at the same instant, some blasphemous menace, the import of which escaped her the moment it was spoken, muttered close in her ear. This terrifying interruption was the cause of the scream which had awakened me; and the condition in which she continued during the remainder of the night confirmed me more than ever in the conviction, that she was suffering under some morbid action of the nervous system.

After this event, which *I* had no hesitation in attributing to fancy, she

became literally afraid to pray, and her misery and despondency increased proportionably.

It was shortly after this that an unusual pressure of business called me into town one evening after office hours. I had left my dear little wife tolerably well, and little Fanny was to be her companion until I returned. She and her little companion occupied the same room in which we sat on the memorable evening which witnessed the arrival of our eccentric guest. Though usually a lively child, it most provokingly happened upon this night that Fanny was heavy and drowsy to excess. Her mamma would have sent her to bed, but that she now literally feared to be left alone; although, however, she could not so far overcome her horror of solitude as to do this, she yet would not persist in combating the poor child's sleepiness.

Accordingly, little Fanny was soon locked in a sound sleep, while her mamma quietly pursued her work beside her. They had been perhaps some ten minutes thus circumstanced, when my wife heard the window softly raised from without—a bony hand parted the curtains, and Mr. Smith leaned into the room.

She was so utterly overpowered at sight of this apparition, that even had it, as she expected, climbed into the room, she told me she could not have uttered a sound, or stirred from the spot where she sate transfixed and petrified.

"Ha, ha!" he said, gently, "I hope you'll excuse this, I must admit, very odd intrusion; but I knew I should find you here, and could not resist the opportunity of raising the window just for a moment, to look in upon a little family picture, and say a word to yourself. I understand that you are troubled, because for some cause you cannot say your prayers—because what you call your 'faith' is, so to speak, dead and gone, and also because what *you* consider bad thoughts are constantly recurring to your mind. Now, all that is very silly. If it is really impossible for you to believe and to pray, what are you to infer from that? It is perfectly plain your Christian system can't be a true one—faith and *prayer* it everywhere represents as the conditions of grace, acceptance, and salvation; and yet your Creator will not *permit* you either to believe or pray. The Christian system is, forsooth, a *free* gift, and yet he who formed *you* and *it*, makes it absolutely impossible for you to accept it. *Is* it, I ask you, from your own experience—is it a free gift? And if your own experience, in which you can't be mistaken, gives its pretensions the lie, why, in the name of common sense, will you persist in believing it. I say it is downright blasphemy to think it has emanated from the Good Spirit—assuming that there is one. It tells you that you must be tormented hereafter in a way only to be made intelligible by the image of eternal fires—pretty strong, we must all allow—unless you comply with certain conditions, which it pretends are so easy that it is a positive pleasure to embrace and perform them; and yet, for the life of you, you can't—physically *can't*—do either. Is this truth and mercy?—or is it swindling and cruelty? Is it the part of the Redeemer, or that of the tyrant, deceiver, and tormentor?"

Up to that moment, my wife had sate breathless and motionless, listening, in the catalepsy of nightmare, to a sort of echo of the vile and impious reasoning which had haunted her for so long. At the last words of the sentence his voice became harsh and thrilling; and his whole manner bespoke a sort of crouching and terrific hatred, the like of which she could not have conceived.

Whatever may have been the cause, she was on a sudden disenchanted. She started to her feet; and, freezing with horror though she was, in a shrill cry of agony commanded him, in the name of God, to depart from her. His whole frame seemed to darken; he drew back silently; the curtains dropped into their places, the window was let down again as stealthily as it had just been raised; and my wife found herself alone in the chamber with our litle child, who had been startled from her sleep by her mother's cry of anguish, and with the fearful words, "tempter," "destroyer," "devil," still ringing in her ears, was weeping bitterly, and holding her terrified mother's hand.

There is nothing, I believe, more infectious than that species of nervousness which shows itself in superstitious fears. I began—although I could not bring

myself to admit anything the least like it—to partake insensibly, but strongly, of the peculiar feelings with which my wife, and indeed my whole household, already regarded the lodger up stairs. The fact was, beside, that the state of my poor wife's mind began to make me seriously uneasy; and, although I was fully sensible of the pecuniary and other advantages attendant upon his stay, they were yet far from outweighing the constant gloom and frequent misery in which his protracted sojourn was involving my once cheerful house. I resolved, therefore, at whatever monetary sacrifice, to put an end to these commotions; and, after several debates with my wife, in which the subject was, as usual, turned in all its possible and impossible bearings, we agreed that, deducting a fair proportion for his five weeks' sojourn, I should return the remainder of his £100, and request immediate possession of his apartments. Like a man suddenly relieved of an insufferable load, and breathing freely once more, I instantly prepared to carry into effect the result of our deliberations.

In pursuance of this resolution, I waited upon Mr. Smith. This time my call was made in the morning, somewhere about nine o'clock. He received me at his door, standing as usual in the stealthy opening which barely admitted his lank person. There he stood, fully equipped with goggles and respirator, and swathed, rather than dressed, in his puckered black garments.

As he did not seem disposed to invite me into his apartment, although I had announced my visit as one of business, I was obliged to open my errand where I stood; and after a great deal of fumbling and muttering, I contrived to place before him distinctly the resolution to which I had come.

"But I can't think of taking back any portion of the sum I have paid you," said he, with a cool, dry emphasis.

"Your reluctance to do so, Mr. Smith, is most handsome, and, I assure you, appreciated," I replied. "It is very generous; but, at the same time, it is quite impossible for me to accept what I have no right to take, and I must beg of you not to mention that part of the subject again."

"And why should *I* take it?" demanded Mr. Smith.

"Because you have paid this hundred pounds for six months, and you are leaving me with nearly five months of the term still unexpired," I replied. "I expect to receive fair play myself, and always give it."

"But who on earth said that I was going away so soon?" pursued Mr. Smith, in the same dry, sarcastic key. "*I* have not said so—because I really don't intend it; I mean to stay here to the last day of the six months for which I have paid you. I have no notion of vacating my hired lodgings, simply because you say, *go*. I shan't quarrel with you—I never quarrel with anybody. I'm as much your friend as ever; but, without the least wish to disoblige, I can't do this, positively I cannot. Is there anything else?"

I had not anticipated in the least the difficulty which thus encountered and upset our plans. I had so set my heart upon effecting the immediate retirement of our inauspicious inmate, that the disappointment literally stunned me for a moment. I, however, returned to the charge: I urged, and prayed, and almost besought him to give up his apartments, and to leave us. I offered to repay every farthing of the sum he had paid me—reserving nothing on account of the time he had already been with us. I suggested all the disadvantages of the house. I shifted my ground, and told him that my wife wanted the rooms; I pressed his gallantry—his good nature—his economy; in short, I assailed him upon every point—but in vain, he did not even take the trouble of repeating what he had said before—he neither relented, nor showed the least irritation, but simply said—

"I can't do this; here I am, and here I stay until the half-year has expired. You wanted a lodger, and you have got one—the quietest, least troublesome, least expensive person you could have; and though your house, servants, and furniture are none of the best, I don't care for that. I pursue my own poor business and enjoyments here entirely to my satisfaction."

Having thus spoken, he gave me a sort of nod, and closed the door.

So, instead of getting rid of him the

next day, as we had hoped, we had nearly five months more of his company in expectancy; I hated, and my wife dreaded the prospect. She was literally miserable and panic-struck at her disappointment—and grew so nervous and wretched that I made up my mind to look out for lodgings for her and the children (subversive of all our schemes of retrenchment as such a step would be), and surrendering the house absolutely to Mr. Smith and the servants during the remainder of his term.

Circumstances, however, occurred to prevent our putting this plan in execution. My wife, meanwhile, was, if possible, more depressed and nervous every day. The servants seemed to sympathise in the dread and gloom which involved ourselves; the very children grew timid and spiritless, without knowing why—and the entire house was pervaded with an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear. A poorhouse or a dungeon would have been cheerful, compared with a dwelling haunted unceasingly with unearthly suspicions and alarms. I would have made any sacrifice short of ruin, to emancipate our household from the odious mental and moral thraldom which was invisibly established over us—overcasting us with strange anxieties and an undefined terror.

About this time my wife had a dream which troubled her much, although she could not explain its supposed significance satisfactorily by any of the ordinary rules of interpretation in such matters. The vision was as follows.

She dreamed that we were busily employed in carrying out our scheme of removal, and that I came into the parlour where she was making some arrangements, and, with rather an agitated manner, told her that the carriage had come for the children. She thought she went out to the hall, in consequence, holding little Fanny by one hand, and the boy—or, as we still called him, "baby"—by the other, and feeling, as she did so, an unaccountable gloom, almost amounting to terror, steal over her. The children, too, seemed, she thought, frightened, and disposed to cry.

So close to the hall-door as to exclude the light, stood some kind of vehicle, of which she could see nothing but that its door was wide open, and the interior involved in total darkness. The children, she thought, shrunk back in great trepidation, and she addressed herself to induce them, by persuasion, to enter, telling them that they were only "going to their new home." So, in a while, little Fanny approached it; but, at the same instant, some person came swiftly up from behind, and, raising the little boy in his hands, said fiercely, "No, the baby first;" and placed him in the carriage. This person was our lodger, Mr. Smith, and was gone as soon as seen. My wife, even in her dream, could not act or speak; but as the child was lifted into the carriage-door, a man, whose face was full of beautiful tenderness and compassion, leaned forward from the carriage and received the little child, which, stretching his arms to the stranger, looked back with a strange smile upon his mother.

"He is safe with me, and I will deliver him to you when you come."

These words the man spoke, looking upon her, as he received him, and immediately the carriage-door shut, and the noise of its closing wakened my wife from her nightmare.

This dream troubled her very much, and even haunted my mind unpleasantly too. We agreed, however, not to speak of it to anybody, nor to divulge any of our misgivings respecting the stranger. We were anxious that neither the children nor the servants should catch the contagion of those fears which had seized upon my poor little wife, and, if truth were spoken, upon myself in some degree also. But this precaution was, I believe, needless, for, as I said before, everybody under the same roof with Mr. Smith was, to a certain extent, affected with the same nervous gloom and apprehension.

And now commences a melancholy chapter in my life. My poor little Fanny was attacked with a cough which soon grew very violent, and after a time degenerated into a sharp attack of inflammation. We were seriously alarmed for her life, and nothing that care and medicine could effect was spared to save it. Her mother was indefatigable, and scarcely left her night or day; and, indeed, for some time, we all but despaired of her recovery.

One night, when she was at the

worst, her poor mother, who had sat for many a melancholy hour listening, by her bedside, to those plaintive incoherences of delirium and moanings of fever, which have harrowed so many a fond heart, gained gradually from her very despair the courage which she had so long wanted, and knelt down at the side of her sick darling's bed to pray for her deliverance.

With clasped hands, in an agony of supplication, she prayed that God would, in his mercy, spare her little child—that, justly as she herself deserved the sorest chastisement His hand could inflict, He would yet deal patiently and tenderly with her in this one thing. She poured out her sorrows before the mercy-seat—she opened her heart, and declared her only hope to be in his pity; without which, she felt that her darling would only leave the bed where she was lying for her grave.

Exactly as she came to this part of her supplication, the child, who had grown, as it seemed, more and more restless, and moaned and muttered with increasing pain and irritation, on a sudden started upright in her bed, and, in a thrilling voice, cried—

"No! no!—the baby first."

The mysterious sentence which had secretly tormented her for so long, thus piercingly uttered by the delirious, and, perhaps, dying child, with what seemed a preternatural earnestness and strength, arrested her devotions, and froze her with a feeling akin to terror.

"Hush, hush, my darling!" said the poor mother, almost wildly, as she clasped the attenuated frame of the sick child in her arms; "hush, my darling; don't cry out so loudly—there—there—my own love."

The child did not appear to see or hear her, but sate up still with feverish cheeks, and bright unsteady eyes, while her dry lips were muttering inaudible words.

"Lie down, my sweet child—lie down, for your own mother," she said; "if you tire yourself, you can't grow well, and your poor mother will lose you."

At these words, the child suddenly cried out again, in precisely the same loud, strong voice—"No! no! the baby first, the baby first"—and immediately afterwards lay down, and fell, for the first time since her illness, into a tranquil sleep.

My good little wife sate, crying bitterly, by her bedside. The child was better—*that* was, indeed, delightful. But then there was an omen in the words, thus echoed from her dream, which she dared not trust herself to interpret, and which yet had seized, with a grasp of iron, upon every fibre of her brain.

"Oh, Richard," she cried, as she threw her arms about my neck, "I am terrified at this horrible menace from the unseen world. Oh! poor, darling little baby, I shall lose you—I am sure I shall lose you. Comfort me, darling, and say he is not to die."

And so I did; and tasked all my powers of argument and persuasion to convince her how unsubstantial was the ground of her anxiety. The little boy was perfectly well, and, even were he to die before his sister, that event might not occur for seventy years to come. I could not, however, conceal from myself that there was something odd and unpleasant in the coincidence; and my poor wife had grown so nervous and excitable, that a much less ominous conjuncture would have sufficed to alarm her.

Meanwhile, the unaccountable terror which our lodger's presence inspired continued to increase. One of our maids gave us warning, solely from her dread of our queer inmate, and the strange accessories which haunted him. She said—and this was corroborated by her fellow-servant—that Mr. Smith seemed to have constantly a companion in his room; that although they never heard them speak, they continually and distinctly heard the tread of two persons walking up and down the room together, and described accurately the peculiar sound of a stick or crutch tapping upon the floor, which my own ears had heard. They also had seen the large, ill-conditioned cat I have mentioned, frequently steal in and out of the stranger's room; and observed that when our little girl was in greatest danger, the hateful animal was constantly writhing, fawning, and crawling about the door of the sick room after nightfall. They were thoroughly persuaded that this ill-omened beast was the foul fiend himself, and I confess I could not—sceptic as I was—bring myself absolutely to the belief that he

was nothing more than "a harmless, necessary cat." These and similar reports—implicitly believed as they palpably were by those who made them—were certainly little calculated to allay the perturbation and alarm with which our household was filled.

The evenings had by this time shortened very much, and darkness often overtook us before we sate down to our early tea. It happened just at this period of which I have been speaking, after my little girl had begun decidedly to mend, that I was sitting in our dining-parlour, with my little boy fast asleep upon my knees, and thinking of I know not what, my wife having gone up stairs, as usual, to sit in the room with little Fanny. As I thus sate in what was to me, in effect, total solitude, darkness unperceived stole on.

On a sudden, as I sate, with my elbow leaning upon the table, and my other arm round the sleeping child, I felt, as I thought, a cold current of air faintly blowing upon my forehead. I raised my head, and saw, as nearly as I could calculate, at the far end of the table on which my arm rested, two large green eyes confronting me. I could see no more, but instantly concluded they were those of the abominable cat. Yielding to an impulse of horror and abhorrence, I caught a water-croft that was close to my hand, and threw it full at it with all my force. I must have missed my object, for the shining eyes continued fixed for a second, and then glided still nearer to me, and then a little nearer still. The noise of the glass smashed with so much force upon the table called in the servant, who happened to be passing. She had a candle in her hand, and, perhaps, the light alarmed the odious beast, for as she came in it was gone.

I had had an undefined idea that its approach was somehow connected with a designed injury of some sort to the sleeping child. I could not be mistaken as to the fact that I had plainly seen the two broad, glaring, green eyes. Where the cursed animal had gone I had not observed: it might, indeed, easily have run out at the door as the servant opened it, but neither of us had seen it do so; and we were every one of us in such a state of nervous excitement, that even this incident was something in the catalogue of our ambiguous experiences.

It was a great happiness to see our darling little Fanny every day mending, and now quite out of danger: this was cheering and delightful. It was also something to know that more than two months of our lodger's term of occupation had already expired; and to realise, as we now could do, by anticipation, the unspeakable relief of his departure.

My wife strove hard to turn our dear child's recovery to good account for me; but the impressions of fear soon depart, and those of religious gratitude must be preceded by religious faith. All as yet was but as seed strewn upon the rock.

Little Fanny, though recovering rapidly, was still very weak, and her mother usually passed a considerable part of every evening in her bedroom—for the child was sometimes uneasy and restless at night. It happened at this period that, sitting as usual at Fanny's bedside, she witnessed an occurrence which agitated her not a little.

The child had been, as it seems, growing sleepy, and was lying listlessly, with eyes half open, apparently taking no note of what was passing. Suddenly, however, with an expression of the wildest terror, she drew up her limbs, and cowered in the bed's head, gazing at some object; which, judging from the motion of her eyes, must have been slowly advancing from the end of the room next the door.

The child made a low shuddering cry, as she grasped her mother's hand, and, with features white and tense with terror, slowly following with her eyes the noiseless course of some unseen spectre, shrinking more and more fearfully backward every moment.

"What is it? Where? What is it that frightens you, my darling?" asked the poor mother, who, thrilled with horror, looked in vain for the apparition which seemed to have all but bereft the child of reason.

"Stay with me—save me—keep it away—look, look at it—making signs to me—don't let it hurt me—it is angry—Oh! mamma, save me, save me!"

The child said this, all the time clinging to her with both her hands, in an ecstacy of panic.

"There—there, my darling," said my poor wife, "don't be afraid; there's nothing but me—your own mamma—and little baby in the room; nothing, my darling; nothing indeed."

"Mamma, mamma, don't move; don't go near him;" the child continued wildly. "It's only his back now; don't make him turn again; he's untying his handkerchief. Oh! baby, baby; he'll *kill* baby! and he's lifting up those green things from his eyes; don't you see him doing it? Mamma, mamma, why does he come here? Oh, mamma, poor baby—poor little baby!"

She was looking with a terrified gaze at the little boy's bed, which lay directly opposite to her own, and in which he was sleeping calmly.

"Hush, hush, my darling child," said my wife, with difficulty restraining an hysterical burst of tears; "for God's sake don't speak so wildly, my own precious love—there, there—don't be frightened—there, darling, there."

"Oh! poor baby—poor little darling baby," the child continued as before; "will no one save him—tell that wicked man to go away—oh—there—why, mamma—don't—oh, sure you won't let him—don't—don't—he'll take the child's life—will you let him lie down that way on the bed—save, poor little baby—oh, baby, baby, waken—his head is on your face."

As she said this she raised her voice to a cry of despairing terror which made the whole room ring again.

This cry, or rather yell, reached my ears as I sate reading in the parlour by myself, and fearing I knew not what, I rushed to the apartment; before I reached it, the sound had subsided into low but violent sobbing; and, just as I arrived at the threshold I heard, close at my feet, a fierce protracted growl, and something rubbing along the surbase. I was in the dark, but, with a feeling of mingled terror and fury, I stamped and struck at the abhorred brute with my feet, but in vain. The next moment I was in the room, and heard little Fanny, through her sobs, cry—

"Oh, poor baby is killed—that wicked man has killed him—he uncovered his face, and put it on him, and lay upon the bed and killed poor baby. I knew he came to kill him. Ah, papa, papa, why did you not come up before he went?—he is gone, he went away as soon as he killed our poor little darling baby."

I could not conceal my agitation, quite, and I said to my wife—

"Has he, Smith, been here?"

"No."

"What is it, then?"

"The child has seen *some* one."

"Seen whom? Who? Who has been here?"

"I did not see it; but—but I am sure the child saw—that is, *thought* she saw *him*;—the person you have named. Oh, God, in mercy deliver us! What shall I do—what shall I do!"

Thus saying, the dear little woman burst into tears, and crying, as if her heart would break, sobbed out an entreaty that I would look at baby; adding, that she herself had not courage to see whether her darling was sleeping or dead.

"Dead!" I exclaimed. "Tut, tut, my darling; you must not give way to such morbid fancies—he is very well, I see him breathing;" and so saying, I went over to the bed where our little boy was lying. He was slumbering; though it seemed to me very heavily, and his cheeks were flushed.

"Sleeping tranquilly, my darling—tranquilly, and deeply; and with a warm colour in his cheeks," I said, rearranging the coverlet, and retiring to my wife, who sate almost breathless whilst I was looking at our little boy.

"Thank God—thank God," she said quietly; and she wept again; and rising, came to his bedside.

"Yes, yes—alive; thank God;" but it seems to me he is breathing very short, and with difficulty, and he looks—*does* he not look hot and feverish? Yes, he *is* very hot; feel his little hand—feel his neck; merciful heaven! he is burning."

It was, indeed, very true, that his skin was unnaturally dry and hot; his little pulse, too, was going at a fearful rate.

"I do think," said I—resolved to conceal the extent of my own apprehensions—"I do think that he *is* just a *little* feverish; but he has often been much more so; and will, I dare say, in the morning, be perfectly well again. I dare say, but for little Fanny's *dream*, we should not have observed it at all."

"Oh, my darling, my darling, my darling!" sobbed the poor little woman, leaning over the bed, with her hands locked together, and looking the very picture of despair. "Oh, my darling, what has happened you? I put you into your bed, looking so well and beautiful, this evening, and here you are, stricken with sickness, my own little love. Oh, you will not—you cannot, leave your poor mother!"

It was quite plain that she despaired of the child from the moment we had ascertained that it was unwell. As it happened, her presentiment was but too truly prophetic. The apothecary said the child's ailment was "suppressed small-pox;" the physician pronounced it "typhus." The only certainty about it was the issue—the child died.

To me few things appear so beautiful as a very young child in its shroud. The little innocent face looks so sublimely simple and confiding amongst the cold terrors of death—crimeless, and fearless, that little mortal has passed alone under the shadow, and explored the mystery of dissolution. There is death in its sublimest and purest image—no hatred, no hypocrisy, no suspicion, no care for the morrow ever darkened that little face; death has come lovingly upon it; there is nothing cruel, or harsh, in his victory. The yearnings of love, indeed, cannot be stifled; for the prattle, and smiles, and all the little world of thoughts that were so delightful, are gone for ever. Awe, too, will overcast us in its presence—for we are looking on death; but we do not fear for the little, lonely voyager—for the child has gone, simple and trusting, into the presence of its all-wise Father; and of such, we know, is the kingdom of heaven.

And so we parted from poor little baby. I and his poor old nurse drove in a mourning carriage, in which lay the little coffin, early in the morning, to the churchyard of ———. Sore, indeed, was my heart, as I followed that little coffin to the grave! Another burial had just concluded as we entered the churchyard, and the mourners stood in clusters round the grave, into which the sexton was now shovelling the mould.

As I stood, with head uncovered, listening to the sublime and touching service which our ritual prescribes, I found that a gentleman had drawn near also, and was standing at my elbow. I did not turn to look at him until the earth had closed over my darling boy; I then walked a little way apart, that I might be alone, and drying my eyes, sat down upon a tombstone, to let the confusion of my mind subside.

While I was thus lost in a sorrowful reverie, the gentleman who had stood near me at the grave was once more at my side. The face of the stranger, though I could not call it handsome, was very remarkable; its expression was the purest and noblest I could conceive, and it was made very beautiful by a look of such compassion as I never saw before.

"Why do you sorrow as one without hope?" he said, gently.

"I *have* no hope," I answered.

"Nay, I think you have," he answered again; "and I am sure you will soon have more. That little child for which you grieve, has escaped the dangers and miseries of life; its body has perished; but he will receive in the end the crown of life. God has given him an early victory."

I know not what it was in him that rebuked my sullen pride, and humbled and saddened me, as I listened to this man. He was dressed in deep mourning, and looked more serene, noble, and sweet than any I had ever seen. He was young, too, as I have said, and his voice very clear and harmonious. He talked to me for a long time, and I listened to him with involuntary reverence. At last, however, he left me, saying he had often seen me walking into town, about the same hour that he used to go that way, and that if he saw me again he would walk with me, and so we might reason of these things together.

It was late when I returned to my home, now a house of mourning.

THE MYSTERIOUS LODGER.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

Our home was one of sorrow and of fear. The child's death had stricken us with terror no less than grief. Referring it, as we both tacitly did, to the mysterious and fiendish agency of the abhorred being whom, in an evil hour, we had admitted into our house, we both viewed him with a degree and species of fear for which I can find no name.

I felt that some further calamity was impending. I could not hope that we were to be delivered from the presence of the malignant agent who haunted, rather than inhabited our home, without some additional proofs alike of his malice and his power.

My poor wife's presentiments were still more terrible and overpowering, though not more defined, than my own. She was never tranquil while our little girl was out of her sight; always dreading and expecting some new revelation of the evil influence which, as we were indeed both persuaded, had bereft our darling little boy of life. Against an hostility so unearthly and intangible there was no guarding, and the sense of helplessness intensified the misery of our situation. Tormented with doubts of the very basis of her religion, and recoiling from the ordeal of prayer with the strange horror with which the victim of hydrophobia repels the pure water, she no longer found the consolation which, had sorrow reached her in any other shape, she would have drawn from the healing influence of religion. We were both of us unhappy, dismayed, DEMON-STRICKEN.

Meanwhile, our lodger's habits continued precisely the same. If, indeed, the sounds which came from his apartments were to be trusted, he and his agents were more on the alert than ever. I can convey to you, good reader, no notion, even the faintest, of the dreadful sensation always more or less present to my mind, and sometimes with a reality which thrilled me almost to frenzy—the apprehension that I had admitted into my house the incarnate spirit of the dead or damned, to torment me and my family.

It was some nights after the burial of our dear little baby; we had not gone to bed until late, and I had slept, I suppose, some hours, when I was awakened by my wife, who clung to me with the energy of terror. She said nothing, but grasped and shook me with more than her natural strength. She had crept close to me, and was cowering with her head under the bed-clothes.

The room was perfectly dark, as usual, for we burned no night-light; but from the side of the bed next her proceeded a voice as of one sitting there with his head within a foot of the curtains—and, merciful heavens! it was the voice of our lodger.

He was discoursing of the death of our baby, and inveighing, in the old mocking tone of hate and suppressed fury, against the justice, mercy, and goodness of God. He did this with a terrible plausibility of sophistry, and with a resolute emphasis and precision, which seemed to imply, "I have got something to tell you, and, whether you like it or like it not, I *will* say out my say."

To pretend that I felt anger at his intrusion, or emotion of any sort, save the one sense of palsied terror, would be to depart from the truth. I lay, cold and breathless, as if frozen to death—unable to move, unable to utter a cry—with the voice of that demon pouring, in the dark, his undisguised blasphemies and temptations close into my ears. At last the dreadful voice ceased—whether the speaker went or stayed I could not tell—the silence, which he might be improving for the purpose of some hellish stratagem, was to me more tremendous even than his speech.

We both lay awake, not daring to move or speak, scarcely even breathing, but clasping one another fast, until at length the welcome light of day streamed into the room through the opening door, as the servant came in to

call us. I need not say that our nocturnal visitant had left us.

The magnanimous reader will, perhaps, pronounce that I ought to have pulled on my boots and inexpressibles with all available despatch, run to my lodger's bedroom, and kicked him forthwith downstairs, and the entire way moreover out to the public road, as some compensation for the scandalous affront put upon me and my wife by his impertinent visit. Now, at that time, I had no scruples against what are termed the laws of honour, was by no means deficient in "pluck," and gifted, moreover, with a somewhat excitable temper. Yet, I will honestly avow that, so far from courting a collision with the dreaded stranger, I would have recoiled at his very sight, and given my eyes to avoid him, such was the ascendancy which he had acquired over me, as well as everybody else in my household, in his own quiet, irresistible, hellish way.

The shuddering antipathy which our guest inspired did not rob his infernal homily of its effect. It was not a new or strange thing which he presented to our minds. There was an awful subtlety in the train of his suggestions. All that he said had floated through my own mind before, without order, indeed, or shew of logic. From my own rebellious heart the same evil thoughts had risen, like pale apparitions hovering and lost in the fumes of a necromancer's cauldron. His was like the summing up of all this—a reflection of my own feelings and fancies—but reduced to an awful order and definiteness, and clothed with a sophistical form of argument. The effect of it was powerful. It revived and exaggerated these bad emotions—it methodised and justified them—and gave to impulses and impressions, vague and desultory before, something of the compactness of a system.

My misfortune, therefore, did not soften, it exasperated me. I regarded the Great Disposer of events as a persecutor of the human race, who took delight in their miseries. I asked why my innocent child had been smitten down into the grave?—and why my darling wife, whose first object, I knew, had ever been to serve and glorify her Maker, should have been thus tortured and desolated by the cruellest calamity which the malignity of a demon could have devised? I railed and blasphemed, and even in my agony defied God with the impotent rage and desperation of a devil, in his everlasting torment.

In my bitterness, I could not forbear speaking these impenitent repetitions of the language of our nightly visitant, even in the presence of my wife. She heard me with agony, almost with terror. I pitied and loved her too much not to respect even her weaknesses—for so I characterised her humble submission to the chastisements of heaven. But even while I spared her reverential sensitiveness, the spectacle of her patience but enhanced my own gloomy and impenitent rage.

I was walking into town in this evil mood, when I was overtaken by the gentleman whom I had spoken with in the churchyard on the morning when my little boy was buried. I call him *gentleman*, but I could not say *what* was his rank—I never thought about it; there was a grace, a purity, a compassion, and a grandeur of intellect in his countenance, in his language, in his mein, that was beautiful and kinglike. I felt, in his company, a delightful awe, and an humbleness more gratifying than any elation of earthly pride.

He divined my state of feeling, but he said nothing harsh. He did not rebuke, but he reasoned with me—and oh! how mighty was that reasoning—without formality—without effort—as the flower grows and blossoms. Its process was in harmony with the successions of nature—gentle, spontaneous, irresistible.

At last he left me. I was grieved at his departure—I was wonder-stricken. His discourse had made me cry tears at once sweet and bitter; it had sounded depths I knew not of, and my heart was disquieted within me. Yet my trouble was happier than the resentful and defiant calm that had reigned within me before.

When I came home, I told my wife of my having met the same good, wise man I had first seen by the grave of my child. I recounted to her his discourse, and, as I brought it again to mind, my tears flowed afresh, and I was happy while I wept.

I now see that the calamity which bore at first such evil fruit, was good for me. It fixed my mind, however

rebelliously, upon God, and it stirred up all the passions of my heart. Levity, inattention, and self-complacency are obstacles harder to be overcome than the violence of evil passions—the transition from hate is easier than from indifference, to love. A mighty change was making on my mind.

I need not particularise the occasions upon which I again met my friend, for so I knew him to be, nor detail the train of reasoning and feeling which in such interviews he followed out; it is enough to say, that he assiduously cultivated the good seed he had sown, and that his benignant teachings took deep root, and flourished in my soul, heretofore so barren.

One evening, having enjoyed on the morning of the same day another of these delightful and convincing conversations, I was returning on foot homeward; and as darkness had nearly closed, and the night threatened cold and fog, the footpaths were nearly deserted.

As I walked on, deeply absorbed in the discourse I had heard on the same morning, a person overtook me, and continued to walk, without much increasing the interval between us, a little in advance of me. There came upon me, at the same moment, an indefinable sinking of the heart, a strange and unaccountable fear. The pleasing topics of my meditations melted away, and gave place to a sense of danger, all the more unpleasant that it was vague and objectless. I looked up. What was that which moved before me? I stared—I faltered; my heart fluttered as if it would choke me, and then stood still. It was the peculiar and unmistakeable form of our lodger.

Exactly as I looked at him, he turned his head, and looked at me over his shoulder. His face was muffled as usual. I cannot have seen its features with any completeness, yet I felt that his look was one of fury. The next instant he was at my side; and my heart quailed within me—my limbs all but refused their office; yet the very emotions of terror, which might have overcome me, acted as a stimulus, and I quickened my pace.

"Hey! what a pious person! So I suppose you have learned at last that 'evil communications corrupt good manners;' and you are absolutely afraid of the old infidel, the old blasphemer, hey?"

I made him no answer; I was indeed too much agitated to speak.

"You'll make a good Christian, no doubt," he continued; "the independent man, who thinks for himself, reasons his way to his principles, and sticks fast to them, is sure to be true to whatever system he embraces. You have been so consistent a philosopher, that I am sure you will make a steady Christian. You're not the man to be led by the nose by a sophistical mumbler. *You* could never be made the prey of a grasping proselytism; *you* are not the sport of every whiff of doctrine, nor the facile slave of whatever superstition is last buzzed in your ear. No, no: you've got a masculine intellect, and think for yourself, hey?"

I was incapable of answering him. I quickened my pace to escape from his detested persecution; but he was close beside me still.

We walked on together thus for a time, during which I heard him muttering fast to himself, like a man under fierce and malignant excitement. We reached, at length, the gateway of my dwelling; and I turned the latch-key in the wicket, and entered the enclosure. As we stood together within, he turned full upon me, and confronting me with an aspect whose character I felt rather than saw, he said—

"And so you mean to be a Christian, after all! Now just reflect how very absurdly you are choosing. Leave the Bible to that class of fanatics who may hope to be saved under its system, and, in the name of common sense, study the Koran, or some less ascetic tome. Don't be gulled by a plausible slave, who wants nothing more than to multiply *professors* of his theory. Why don't you *read* the Bible, you miserable, puling poltroon, before you hug it as a treasure? Why don't you read it, and learn out of the mouth of the founder of Christianity, that there is one sin for which there is *no* forgiveness—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, hey?—and that sin I myself have heard you commit by the hour—in my presence—in my room. I have heard you commit it in our free

discussions a dozen times. The Bible seals against you the lips of mercy. If *it* be true, you are this moment as irrevocably damned as if you had died with those blasphemies on your lips."

Having thus spoken, he glided into the house. I followed slowly.

His words rang in my ears—I was stunned. What he had said I feared might be true. Giant despair felled me to the earth. He had recalled, and lighted up with a glare from the pit, remembrances with which I knew not how to cope. It was true I had spoken with daring impiety of subjects whose sacredness I now began to appreciate. With trembling hands I opened the Bible. I read and re-read the mysterious doom recorded by the Redeemer himself against blasphemers of the Holy Ghost—monsters set apart from the human race, and damned and dead, even while they live and walk upon the earth. I groaned—I wept. Henceforward the Bible, I thought, must be to me a dreadful record of despair. I dared not read it.

I will not weary you with all my mental agonies. My dear little wife did something toward relieving my mind, but it was reserved for the friend, to whose heavenly society I owed so much, to tranquillise it once more. He talked this time to me longer, and even more earnestly than before. I soon encountered him again. He expounded to me the ways of Providence, and showed me how needful sorrow was for every servant of God. How mercy was disguised in tribulation, and our best happiness came to us, like our children, in tears and wailing. He showed me that trials were sent to call us up, with a voice of preternatural power, from the mortal apathy of sin and the world. And then, again, in our new and better state, to prove our patience and our faith—

"The more trouble befalls you, the nearer is God to you. He visits you in sorrow—and sorrow, as well as joy, is a sign of his presence. If, then, other griefs overtake you, remember this—be patient, be faithful, and bless the name of God."

I returned home comforted and happy, although I felt assured that some further and sadder trial was be[illegible]e me.

Still our household was overcast by the same insurmountable dread of our tenant. The same strange habits characterised him, and the same unaccountable sounds disquieted us—an atmosphere of death and malice hovered about his door, and we all hated and feared to pass it.

Let me now tell, as well and briefly as I may, the dreadful circumstances of my last great trial. One morning, my wife being about her household affairs, and I on the point of starting for town, I went into the parlour for some letters which I was to take with me. I cannot easily describe my consternation when, on entering the room, I saw our lodger seated near the window, with our darling little girl upon his knee.

His back was toward the door, but I could plainly perceive that the respirator had been removed from his mouth, and that the odious green goggles were raised. He was sitting, as it seemed, absolutely without motion, and his face was advanced close to that of the child.

I stood looking at this group in a state of stupor for some seconds. He was, I suppose, conscious of my presence, for although he did not turn his head, or otherwise take any note of my arrival, he readjusted the muffler which usually covered his mouth, and lowered the clumsy spectacles to their proper place.

The child was sitting upon his knee as motionless as he himself, with a countenance white and rigid as that of a corpse, and from which every trace of meaning, except some vague character of terror, had fled, and staring with a fixed and dilated gaze into his face.

As it seemed, she did not perceive my presence. Her eyes were transfixed and fascinated. She did not even seem to me to breathe. Horror and anguish at last overcame my stupefaction.

"What—what is it?" I cried; "what ails my child, my darling child?"

"I'd be glad to know, myself," he replied, coolly; "it is certainly something very queer."

"What is it, darling?" I repeated, frantically, addressing the child.

"What is it?" he reiterated. "Why it's pretty plain, I should suppose, that the child is ill."

"Oh merciful God!" I cried, half furious, half terrified—"You have injured her—you have terrified her. Give me my child—give her to me."

These words I absolutely shouted, and stamped upon the floor in my horrid excitement.

"Pooh, pooh!" he said, with a sort of ugly sneer; "the child is nervous—you'll make her more so—be quiet, and she'll probably find her tongue presently. I have had her on my knee some minutes, but the sweet bird could not tell what ails her."

"Let the child go," I shouted in a voice of thunder; "let her go, I say—let her go."

He took the passive, death-like child, and placed her standing by the window, and rising, he simply said—

"As soon as you grow cool, you are welcome to ask me what questions you like. The child is plainly ill. I should not wonder if she had seen something that frightened her."

Having thus spoken, he passed from the room. I felt as if I spoke, saw, and walked in a horrid dream. I seized the darling child in my arms, and bore her away to her mother.

"What is it—for mercy's sake what is the matter?" she cried, growing in an instant as pale as the poor child herself.

"I found that—that *demon*—in the parlour with the child on his lap, staring in her face. She is manifestly terrified."

"Oh! gracious God! she is lost—she is killed," cried the poor mother, frantically looking into the white, apathetic, meaningless face of the child.

"Fanny, darling Fanny, tell us if you are ill," I cried, pressing the little girl in terror to my heart.

"Tell your own mother, my darling," echoed my poor little wife. "Oh! darling, darling child, speak to your poor mother."

It was all in vain. Still the same dilated, imploring gaze—the same pale face—wild and dumb. We brought her to the open window—we gave her cold water to drink—we sprinkled it in her face. We sent for the apothecary, who lived hard by, and he arrived in a few moments, with a parcel of tranquillising medicines. These, however, were equally unavailing.

Hour after hour passed away. The darling child looked upon us as if she would have given the world to speak to us, or to weep, but she uttered no sound. Now and then she drew a long breath as though preparing to say something, but still she was mute. She often put her hand to her throat, as if there was some pain or obstruction there.

I never can, while I live, lose one line of that mournful and terrible portrait—the face of my stricken child. As hour after hour passed away, without bringing the smallest change or amendment, we grew both alarmed, and at length absolutely terrified for her safety.

We called in a physician toward night, and told him that we had reason to suspect that the child had somehow been frightened, and that in no other way could we at all account for the extraordinary condition in which he found her.

This was a man, I may as well observe, though I do not name him, of the highest eminence in his profession, and one in whose skill, from past personal experience, I had the best possible reasons for implicitly confiding.

He asked a multiplicity of questions, the answers to which seemed to baffle his attempts to arrive at a satisfactory diagnosis. There was something undoubtedly anomalous in the case, and I saw plainly that there were features in it which puzzled and perplexed him not a little.

At length, however, he wrote his prescription, and promised to return at nine o'clock. I remember there was something to be rubbed along her spine, and some medicines beside.

But these remedies were as entirely unavailing as the others. In a state of dismay and distraction we watched by the bed in which, in accordance with the physician's direction, we had placed her. The absolute changelessness of her condition filled us with despair. The day which had elapsed had not witnessed even a transitory variation in the dreadful character of her seizure. Any change, even a change for the worse, would have been better than this sluggish, hopeless monotony of suffering.

At the appointed hour the physician returned. He appeared disappointed, almost shocked, at the failure of his prescriptions. On feeling her pulse he declared that she must have a little

wine. There had been a wonderful prostration of all the vital powers since he had seen her before. He evidently thought the case a strange and precarious one.

She was made to swallow the wine, and her pulse rallied for a time, but soon subsided again. I and the physician were standing by the fire, talking in whispers of the darling child's symptoms, and likelihood of recovery, when we were arrested in our conversation by a cry of anguish from the poor mother, who had never left the bedside of her little child, and this cry broke into bitter and convulsive weeping.

The poor little child had, on a sudden, stretched down her little hands and feet, and died. There is no mistaking the features of death: the filmy eye and dropt jaw once seen, are recognised whenever we meet them again. Yet, spite of our own belief, we cling to hope; and the distracted mother called on the physician, in accents which might have moved a statue, to say that her darling was not dead, not quite dead—that something might still be done—that it could not be all over. Silently he satisfied himself that no throb of life still fluttered in that little frame.

"It is, indeed, all over," he said, in tones scarce above a whisper; and pressing my hand kindly, he said, "comfort your poor wife;" and so, after a momentary pause, he left the room.

This blow had smitten me with stunning suddenness. I looked at the dead child, and from her to her poor mother. Grief and pity were both swallowed up in the transports of fury and detestation with which the presence in my house of the wretch who had wrought all this destruction and misery filled my soul. My heart swelled with ungovernable rage; for a moment my habitual fear of him was neutralised by the vehemence of these passions. I seized a candle in silence, and mounted the stairs. The sight of the accursed cat, flitting across the lobby, and the loneliness of the hour, made me hesitate for an instant. I had, however, gone so far, that shame sustained me. Overcoming a momentary thrill of dismay, and determined to repel and defy the influence that had so long awed me, I knocked sharply at the door, and, almost at the same instant, pushed it open, and entered our lodger's chamber.

He had had no candle in the room, and it was lighted only by the "darkness visible" that entered through the window. The candle which I held very imperfectly illuminated the large apartment; but I saw his spectral form floating, rather than walking, back and forward in front of the windows.

At sight of him, though I hated him more than ever, my instinctive fear returned. He confronted me, and drew nearer and nearer, without speaking. There was something indefinably fearful in the silent attraction which seemed to be drawing him to me. I could not help recoiling, little by little, as he came toward me, and with an effort I said—

"You know why I have come: the child—she's dead!"

"Dead—ha!—*dead*—is she?" he said, in his odious, mocking tone.

"Yes—dead!" I cried, with an excitement which chilled my very marrow with horror; "and *you* have killed her, as you killed my other."

"How?—I killed her!—eh?—ha, ha!" he said, still edging nearer and nearer.

"Yes; I say you!" I shouted, trembling in every joint, but possessed by that unaccountable infatuation which has made men invoke, spite of themselves, their own destruction, and which I was powerless to resist—"deny it as you may, it is you who killed her — wretch!—FIEND!—no wonder she could not stand the breath and glare of HELL!"

"And you are one of those who believe that not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Creator's consent," he said, with icy sarcasm; "and this is a specimen of Christian resignation—hey? You charge his act upon a poor fellow like me, simply that you may cheat the devil, and rave and rebel against the decrees of heaven, under pretence of abusing me. The breath and glare of hell!—eh? You mean that I removed this and these (touching the covering of his mouth and eyes successively) as I *shall* do now again, and show you there's no great harm in that."

There was a tone of menace in his

concluding words not to be mistaken.

"Murderer and liar from the beginning, as you are, I defy you!" I shouted, in a frenzy of hate and horror, stamping furiously on the floor.

As I said this, it seemed to me that he darkened and dilated before my eyes. My senses, thoughts, consciousness, grew horribly confused, as if some powerful, extraneous will, were seizing upon the functions of my brain. Whether I were to be mastered by death, or madness, or possession, I knew not; but hideous destruction of some sort was impending: all hung upon the moment, and I cried aloud, in my agony, an adjuration in the name of the three persons of the Trinity, that he should not torment me.

Stunned, bewildered, like a man recovered from a drunken fall, I stood, freezing and breathless, in the same spot, looking into the room, which wore, in my eyes, a strange, unearthly character. Mr. Smith was cowering darkly in the window, and, after a silence, spoke to me in a croaking, sulky tone, which was, however, unusually submissive.

"Don't it strike you as an odd procedure to break into a gentleman's apartment at such an hour, for the purpose of railing at him in the coarsest language? If you have any charge to make against me, do so; I invite inquiry, and defy your worst. If you think you can bring home to me the smallest share of blame in this unlucky matter, call the coroner, and let his inquest examine and cross-examine me, and sift the matter—if, indeed, there is anything to *be* sifted—to the bottom. Meanwhile, go you about your business, and leave me to mine. But I see how the wind sits: you want to get rid of me, and so you make the place odious to me. But it won't do; and if you take to making criminal charges against me, you had better look to yourself; for two can play at that game."

There was a suppressed whine in all this, which strangely contrasted with the cool and threatening tone of his previous conversation.

Without answering a word I hurried from the room, and scarcely felt secure, even when once more in the melancholy chamber, where my poor wife was weeping.

Miserable, horrible was the night that followed. The loss of our child was a calamity which we had not dared to think of. It had come, and with a suddenness enough to bereave me of reason. It seemed all unreal, all fantastic. It needed an effort to convince me, minute after minute, that the dreadful truth was so; and the old accustomed feeling that she was still alive, still running from room to room, and the expectation that I should hear her step and her voice, and see her entering at the door, would return. But still the sense of dismay, of having received some stunning, irreparable blow, remained behind; and then came the horrible effort, like that with which one rouses himself from a haunted sleep, the question, "What disaster is this that has befallen?"—answered, alas! but too easily, too terribly! Amidst all this was perpetually rising before my fancy the obscure, dilated figure of our lodger, as he had confronted me in his malign power that night. I dismissed the image with a shudder as often as it recurred; and even now, at this distance of time, I have felt more than I could well describe in the mere effort to fix my recollection upon its hated traits, while writing the passages I have just concluded.

This hateful scene I did not recount to my poor wife. Its horrors were too fresh upon me. I had not courage to trust myself with the agitating narrative; and so I sate beside her, with her hand locked in mine: I had no comfort to offer but the dear love I bore her.

At last, like a child, she cried herself to sleep—the dull, heavy slumber of worn-out grief. As for me, the agitation of my soul was too fearful and profound for repose. My eyes accidentally rested on the holy volume, which lay upon the table open, as I had left it in the morning; and the first words which met my eye were these—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This blessed sentence riveted my attention, and shed a stream of solemn joy upon my heart; and so the greater part of that mournful night, I continued to draw comfort and heavenly wisdom from the same inspired source.

Next day brought that odious incident, the visit of the undertaker—the carpentery, upholstery, and millinery of death. Why has not civilisation abolished these repulsive and shocking formalities? What has the poor corpse to do with frills, and pillows, and napkins, and all the equipage in which it rides on its last journey? There is no intrusion so jarring to the decent grief of surviving affection, no conceivable mummery more derisive of mortality.

In the room which we had been so long used to call "the nursery," now desolate and mute, the unclosed coffin lay, with our darling shrouded in it. Before we went to our rest at night we visited it. In the morning the lid was to close over that sweet face, and I was to see the child laid by her little brother. We looked upon the well-known and loved features, purified in the sublime serenity of death, for a long time, whispering to one another, among our sobs, how sweet and beautiful we thought she looked; and at length, weeping bitterly, we tore ourselves away.

We talked and wept for many hours, and at last, in sheer exhaustion, dropt asleep. My little wife awaked me, and said—

"I think they have come—the—the undertakers."

It was still dark, so I could not consult my watch; but they were to have arrived early, and as it was winter, and the nights long, the hour of their visit might well have arrived.

"What, darling, is your reason for thinking so?" I asked.

"I am sure I have heard them for some time in the nursery," she answered. "Oh! dear, dear little Fanny! Don't allow them to close the coffin until I have seen my darling once more."

I got up, and threw some clothes hastily about me. I opened the door and listened. A sound like a muffled knocking reached me from the nursery.

"Yes, my darling!" I said, "I think they have come. I will go and desire them to wait until you have seen her again."

And, so saying, I hastened from the room.

Our bedchamber lay at the end of a short corridor, opening from the lobby, at the head of the stairs, and the nursery was situated nearly at the end of a corresponding passage, which opened from the same lobby at the opposite side. As I hurried along I distinctly heard the same sounds. The light of dawn had not yet appeared, but there was a strong moonlight shining through the windows. I thought the morning could hardly be so far advanced as we had at first supposed; but still, strangely as it now seems to me, suspecting nothing amiss, I walked on in noiseless, slippered feet, to the nursery-door. It stood half open; some one had unquestionably visited it since we had been there. I stepped forward, and entered. At the threshold horror arrested my advance.

The coffin was placed upon tressels at the further extremity of the chamber, with the foot of it nearly towards the door, and a large window at the side of it admitted the cold lustre of the moon full upon the apparatus of mortality, and the objects immediately about it.

At the foot of the coffin stood the ungainly form of our lodger. He seemed to be intently watching the face of the corpse, and was stooped a little, while with his hands he tapped sharply, from time to time at the sides of the coffin, like one who designs to awaken a slumberer. Perched upon the body of the child, and nuzzling among the grave-clothes, with a strange kind of ecstasy, was the detested brute, the cat I have so often mentioned.

The group thus revealed, I looked upon but for one instant; in the next I shouted, in absolute terror—

"In God's name! what are you doing?"

Our lodger shuffled away abruptly, as if disconcerted; but the ill-favoured cat, whisking round, stood like a demon sentinel upon the corpse, growling and hissing, with arched back and glaring eyes.

The lodger, turning abruptly toward me, motioned me to one side. Mechanically I obeyed his gesture, and he hurried hastily from the room.

Sick and dizzy, I returned to my own chamber. I confess I had not nerve to combat the infernal brute, which still held possession of the room, and so I left it undisturbed.

This incident I did not tell to my wife until some time afterwards; and I mention it here because it was, and

is, in my mind associated with a painful circumstance which very soon afterwards came to light.

That morning I witnessed the burial of my darling child. Sore and desolate was my heart; but with infinite gratitude to the great controller of all events, I recognised in it a change which nothing but the spirit of all good can effect. The love and fear of God had grown strong within me—in humbleness I bowed to his awful will—with a sincere trust I relied upon the goodness, the wisdom, and the mercy of him who had sent this great affliction. But a further incident connected with this very calamity was to test this trust and patience to the uttermost.

It was still early when I returned, having completed the last sad office. My wife, as I afterwards learned, still lay weeping upon her bed. But somebody awaited my return in the hall, and opened the door, anticipating my knock. This person was our lodger.

I was too much appalled by the sudden presentation of this abhorred spectre even to retreat, as my instinct would have directed, through the open door.

"I have been expecting your return," he said, "with the design of saying something which it might have profited you to learn, but now I apprehend it is too late. What a pity you are so violent and impatient; you would not have heard me, in all probability, this morning. You cannot think how cross-grained and intemperate you have grown since you became a saint—but that is your affair, not mine. You have buried your little daughter this morning. It requires a good deal of that new attribute of yours, *faith*, which judges all things by a rule of contraries, and can never see anything but kindness in the worst afflictions which malignity could devise, to discover benignity and mercy in the torturing calamity which has just punished you and your wife for *nothing!* But I fancy that it will be harder still when I tell you what I more than suspect—ha, ha. It would be really ridiculous, if it were not heart-rending; that your little girl has been actually buried *alive;* do you comprehend me?—alive. For, upon my life, I fancy she was not dead as she lay in her coffin."

I knew the wretch was exulting in the fresh anguish he had just inflicted. I know not how it was, but any announcement of *disaster* from his lips, seemed to me to be necessarily true. Half-stifled with the dreadful emotions he had raised, palpitating between hope and terror, I rushed frantically back again, the way I had just come, running as fast as my speed could carry me, toward the, alas! distant burial-ground where my darling lay.

I stopped a cab slowly returning to town, at the corner of the lane, sprang into it, directed the man to drive to the church of ——, and promised him anything and everything for despatch. The man seemed amazed; doubtful, perhaps, whether he carried a maniac or a malefactor. Still he took his chance for the promised reward, and galloped his horse, while I, tortured with suspense, yelled my frantic incentives to further speed.

At last, in a space immeasurably short, but which to me was protracted almost beyond endurance, we reached the spot. I halloed to the sexton, who was now employed upon another grave, to follow me. I myself seized a mattock, and in obedience to my incoherent and agonised commands, he worked as he had never worked before. The crumbling mould flew swiftly to the upper soil—deeper and deeper, every moment, grew the narrow grave—at last I sobbed, "Thank God—thank God," as I saw the face of the coffin emerge; a few seconds more and it lay upon the sward beside me, and we both, with the edges of our spades, ripped up the lid.

There was the corpse—but not the tranquil statue I had seen it last. Its knees were both raised, and one of its little hands drawn up and clenched near its throat, as if in a feeble but agonised struggle to force up the superincumbent mass. The eyes, that I had last seen closed, were now open, and the face no longer serenely pale, but livid and distorted.

I had time to see all in an instant; the whole scene reeled and darkened before me, and I swooned away.

When I came to myself, I found that I had been removed to the vestry-room. The open coffin was in the aisle of the church, surrounded by a curious crowd. A medical gentleman had examined the body carefully, and

had pronounced life totally extinct. The trepidation and horror I experienced were indescribable. I felt like the murderer of my own child. Desperate as I was of any chance of its life, I dispatched messengers for no less than three of the most eminent physicians then practising in London. All concurred—the child was now as dead as any other, the oldest tenant of the churchyard.

Notwithstanding which, I would not permit the body to be reinterred for several days, until the symptoms of decay became unequivocal, and the most fantastic imagination could no longer cherish a doubt. This, however, I mention only parenthetically, as I hasten to the conclusion of my narrative. The circumstance which I have last described found its way to the public, and caused no small sensation at the time.

I drove part of the way home, and then discharged the cab, and walked the remainder. On my way, with an emotion of ecstasy I cannot describe, I met the good being to whom I owed so much. I ran to meet him, and felt as if I could throw myself at his feet, and kiss the very ground before him. I knew by his heavenly countenance he was come to speak comfort and healing to my heart.

With humbleness and gratitude, I drank in his sage and holy discourse. I need not follow the gracious and delightful exposition of God's revealed will and character with which he cheered and confirmed my faltering spirit. A solemn joy, a peace and trust, streamed on my heart. The wreck and desolation there, lost their bleak and ghastly character, like ruins illuminated by the mellow beams of a solemn summer sunset.

In this conversation, I told him what I had never revealed to any one before—the absolute terror, in all its stupendous and maddening amplitude, with which I regarded our ill-omened lodger, and my agonised anxiety to rid my house of him. My companion answered me—

"I know the person of whom you speak—he designs no good for you or any other. He, too, knows me, and I have intimated to him that he must now leave you, and visit you no more. Be firm and bold, trusting in God, through his Son, like a good soldier, and you will win the victory from a greater and even worse than he—the *unseen* enemy of mankind. You need not see or speak with your evil tenant any more. Call to him from your hall, in the name of the Most Holy, to leave you bodily, with all that appertains to him, this evening. He knows that he must go, and will obey you. But leave the house as soon as may be yourself; you will scarce have peace in it. Your own remembrances will trouble you, and *other minds have established associations within its walls and chambers too.*"

These words sounded mysteriously in my ears.

Let me say here, before I bring my reminiscences to a close, a word or two about the house in which these detested scenes occurred, and which I did not long continue to inhabit. What I afterwards learned of it, seemed to supply in part a dim explanation of these words.

In a country village there is no difficulty in accounting for the tenacity with which the sinister character of a haunted tenement cleaves to it. Thin neighbourhoods are favourable to scandal; and in such localities the reputation of a house, like that of a woman, once blown upon, never quite recovers. In huge London, however, it is quite another matter; and, therefore, it was with some surprise that, five years after I had vacated the house in which the occurrences I have described took place, I learned that a respectable family who had taken it were obliged to give it up, on account of annoyances, for which they could not account, and all proceeding from the apartments formerly occupied by our "lodger." Among the sounds described were footsteps restlessly traversing the floor of that room, accompanied by the peculiar tapping of the crutch.

I was so anxious about this occurrence, that I contrived to have strict inquiries made into the matter. The result, however, added little to what I had at first learned—except, indeed, that our old friend, the cat, bore a part in the transaction, as I suspected; for the servant, who had been placed to sleep in the room, complained that something bounded on and off, and ran to-and-fro along the foot of the bed, in the dark. The same servant,

while in the room, in the broad daylight, had heard the sound of walking, and even the rustling of clothes near him, as of people passing and repassing; and, although he had never seen anything, he yet became so terrified that he would not remain in the house, and ultimately, in a short time, left his situation.

These sounds, attention having been called to them, were now incessantly observed—the measured walking up and down the room, the opening and closing of the door, and the teazing tap of the crutch—all these sounds were continually repeated, until at last, worn out, frightened, and worried, its occupants resolved on abandoning the house.

About four years since, having had occasion to visit the capital, I resolved on a ramble by Old Brompton, just to see if the house were still inhabited. I searched for it, however, in vain, and at length, with difficulty, ascertained its site, upon which now stood two small, staring, bran-new brick houses, with each a gay enclosure of flowers. Every trace of our old mansion, and, let us hope, of our "mysterious lodger," had entirely vanished.

Let me, however, return to my narrative where I left it.

Discoursing upon heavenly matters, my good and gracious friend accompanied me even within the outer gate of my own house. I asked him to come in and rest himself, but he would not; and before he turned to depart, he lifted up his hand, and blessed me and my household.

Having done this, he went away. My eyes followed him till he disappeared, and I turned to the house. My darling wife was standing at the window of the parlour. There was a seraphic smile on her face—pale, pure, and beautiful as death. She was gazing with an humble, heavenly earnestness on us. The parting blessing of the stranger shed a sweet and hallowed influence on my heart. I went into the parlour, to my darling: childless she was now; I had now need to be a tender companion to her.

She raised her arms in a sort of transport, with the same smile of gratitude and purity, and, throwing them round my neck, she said—

"I have seen him—it is he—the man that came with you to the door, and blessed us as he went away—is the same I saw in my dream—the same who took little baby in his arms, and said he would take care of him, and give him safely to me again."

More than a quarter of a century has glided away since then; other children have been given us by the good God—children who have been, from infancy to maturity, a pride and blessing to us. Sorrows and reverses, too, have occasionally visited us; yet, on the whole, we have been greatly blessed; prosperity has long since ended all the cares of the *res angusta domi*, and expanded our power of doing good to our fellow-creatures. God has given it; and God, we trust, directs its dispensation. In our children, and—would you think it?—our *grand*-children, too, the same beneficent God has given us objects that elicit and return all the delightful affections, and exchange the sweet converse that makes home and family dearer than aught else, save that blessed home where the Christian family shall meet at last.

The dear companion of my early love and sorrows still lives, blessed be Heaven! The evening tints of life have fallen upon her; but the dear remembrance of a first love, that never grew cold, makes her beauty changeless for me. As for your humble servant, he is considerably her senior, and looks it: time has stolen away his raven locks, and given him a *chevelure* of snow instead. But, as I said before, I and my wife love, and, I believe, *admire* one another more than ever; and I have often seen our elder children smile archly at one another, when they thought we did not observe them, thinking, no doubt, how like a pair of lovers we two were.

BILLY MALOWNEY'S TASTE OF LOVE AND GLORY.

Let the reader fancy a soft summer evening, the fresh dews falling on bush and flower; the sun has just gone down, and the thrilling vespers of thrushes and blackbirds ring with a wild joy through the saddened air; the west is piled with fantastic clouds, and clothed in tints of crimson and amber, melting away into a wan green, and so eastward into the deepest blue, through which soon the stars will begin to peep. Let him fancy himself seated upon the low mossy wall of an ancient churchyard, where hundreds of grey stones rise above the sward, under the fantastic branches of two or three half-withered ash trees, spreading their arms in everlasting love and sorrow over the dead. The narrow road upon which I and my companion await the tax-cart that is to carry me and my basket, with its rich fruitage of speckled trout, away, lies at his feet, and far below spreads an undulating plain, rising westward again into soft hills, and traversed (every here and there visibly) by a winding stream, which, even through the mists of evening, catches and returns the funereal glories of the skies. As the eye traces its wayward wanderings, it loses them for a moment in the heaving verdure of white-thorns and ash, from among which floats from some dozen rude chimneys, mostly unseen, the transparent blue film of turf smoke. There we know, although we cannot see it, the steep old bridge of Carrickadrum spans the river; and stretching away far to the right, the valley of Lisnamoe, its steeps and hollows, its straggling hedges, its fair-green, its tall scattered trees, and old grey tower, are disappearing fast among the discoloured tints and haze of evening. Those landmarks, as we sit, listlessly, expecting the arrival of our modest conveyance, suggest to our companion—a bare-legged Celtic brother of the gentle craft, somewhat at the wrong side of forty, with a turf-coloured caubeen, patched frieze, a clear, brown complexion, dark grey eyes, and a right pleasant dash of roguery in his features—the tale, which if the reader pleases, he is welcome to hear along with me, just as it falls from the lips of our humble comrade. His words I can give, but your own fancy must supply the advantages of an intelligent, expressive countenance, and what is perhaps harder still, the harmony of his glorious brogue, that, like the melodies of our own dear country, will leave a burthen of mirth or of sorrow with nearly equal propriety; tickling the diaphragm as easily as it plays with the heartstrings; and is in itself a national music, that, I trust, may never, never—scouted and despised though it be—never cease, like the lost tones of our harp, to be heard in the fields of my country, in welcome or endearment, in fun or in sorrow, stirring the hearts of Irish men and Irish women. My friend of the caubeen and naked shanks, then, commenced, and continued his relation, as nearly as possible, in the following words:—

Av coorse ye often heerd talk of Billy Malowney, that lived by the bridge of Carrickadrum. Leum-a-rinka was the name they put on him, he was sich a beautiful dancer. An' faix, it's he was the rale sportin' boy, every way—killing the hares and gatling the salmons, an' fightin' the men, an' funnin' the women, and coortin' the girls; an', be the same token, there was not a colleen inside iv his jurisdiction but was breakin' her heart wid the fair love iv him. Well, this was all pleasant enough, to be sure, while it lasted; but inhuman beings is born to misfortune, an' Bill's divarshin was not to last always. A young boy can't be continially coortin' and kissin' the girls (an' more's the pity) without exposin' himself to the most eminent parril; an' so signs an, what should happen Billy Malowney himself, but to fall in love at last wid little Molly Donovan, in Coolnamoe.

I never could ondherstand why, in the world, it was Bill fell in love wid *her*, above all the girls in the country. She was not within four stone weight

iv being as fat as Peg Brallaghan; and as for redness in the face, she could not hould a candle to Judy Flaherty. (Poor Judy! she was my sweetheart, the darlin', an' coorted me constant, ever antil she married a boy of the Butlers; an' it's twenty years now since she was buried under the ould white-thorn in Garbally. But that's no matther!) Well, at any rate, Molly Donovan tuck his fancy, an' that's everything! She had smooth brown hair—as smooth as silk—an' a pair iv soft coaxin eyes—an' the whitest little teeth you ever seen; an', bedad, she was every taste as much in love wid himself as he was.

Well, now, he was raly stupid wid love: there was not a bit of fun left in him. He was good for nothin' an airth bud sittin' under bushes, smokin' tobacky, and sighin' till you'd wondher how in the world he got wind for it all. An, bedad, he was an illigant scholar, moreover; an', so signs, it's many's the song he made about her; an' if you'd be walkin' in the evening, a mile away from Carrickadrum, begorra you'd hear him singin' out like a bull, all across the country, in her praises.

Well, ye may be sure, ould Tim Donovan and the wife was not a bit too well plased to see Bill Malowney coortin' their daughter Molly; for, do ye mind, she was the only child they had, and her fortune was thirty-five pounds, two cows, and five illegant pigs, three iron pots and a skillet, an' a trifle iv poultry in hand; and no one knew how much besides, whenever the Lord id be plased to call the ould people out of the way into glory!

So, it was not likely ould Tim Donovan id be fallin' in love wid poor Bill Malowney as aisy as the girls did; for, barrin' his beauty, an' his gun, an' his dhudheen, an' his janius, the divil a taste of property iv any sort or description he had in the wide world!

Well, as bad as that was, Billy would not give in that her father and mother had the smallest taste iv a right to intherfare, good or bad. "An' you're welcome to rayfuse me," says he, "whin I ax your lave," says he; "an' I'll ax your lave," says he, "whenever I want to coort yourselves," says he; "but it's your daughter I'm coortin' at the present," says he, "an' that's all I'll say," says he; "for I'd as soon take a doase of salts as be discoursin' ye," says he. So it was a rale blazin' battle betune himself and the ould people; an', begorra, there was no soart iv blaguardin' that did not pass betune them; an' they put a solemn injection on Molly again seein' him or meetin' him for the future.

But it was all iv no use. You might as well be pursuadin' the birds agin flying, or sthrivin' to coax the stars out iv the sky into your hat, as be talking common sinse to them that's fairly bothered and burstin' wid love. There's nothin' like it. The toothache an' cholic together id compose you betther for an argyment than itself. It leaves you fit for nothin' bud nansinse. It's stronger than whiskey, for one good drop iv it will make you drunk for one year, and sick, begorra, for a dozen. It's stronger than the say, for it'll carry you round the world an' never let you sink, in sunshine or storm; an', begorra, it's stronger than Death himself, for it is not affeard iv him, bedad, bud dares him in every shape.

Bud lovers has quarrels sometimes, and, begorra, when they do, you'd a'most imagine they hated one another like man and wife. An' so signs an, Billy Malowney and Molly Donovan fell out one evening at ould Tom Dundon's wake; an' whatever came betune them, she made no more about it but just draws her cloak round her, and away wid herself and the sarvant-girl home again, as if there was not a corpse, or a fiddle, or a taste of divarsion in it.

Well, Bill Malowney follied her down the boreen, to try could he deludher her back again; but, if she was bitther before, she gave it to him in airnest when she got him alone to herself, and to that degree that he wished her safe home, short and sulky enough, an' walked back again, as mad as the Devil himself, to the wake, to pay a respect to poor Tom Dundon.

Well, my dear, it was aisy seen there was something wrong wid Billy Malowney, for he paid no attintion the rest of the evening to any soart of divarsion but the whiskey alone; an' every glass he'd drink it's what he'd be wishing the Divil had the women, and the worst iv bad luck to all soarts iv courting, until, at last, wid the goodness iv the sperits, an' the badness iv his

temper, an' the constant flusthration iv cursin', he grew all as one as you might say almost, saving your presince, bastely drunk!

Well, who should he fall in wid, in that childish condition, as he was deploying along the road almost as straight as the letter S, an' cursin' the girls, an' roarin' for more whiskey, but the recruiting-sargent iv the Welsh Confusileers. So, cute enough, the sargent begins to convarse him, an' it was not long until he had him sitting in Murphy's public-house, wid an elegant dandy iv punch before him, an' the King's money safe an' snug in the lowest wrinkle of his breeches-pocket.

So away wid him, and the dhrums and fifes playing, an' a dozen more unforthunate bliggards just listed along with him, an' he shakin' hands wid the sargent, and swearin' agin the women every minute, until, be the time he kem to himself, begorra, he was a good ten miles on the road to Dublin, an' Molly and all behind him.

It id be no good tellin' you iv the letters he wrote to her from the barracks there, nor how she was breaking her heart to go and see him just wanst before he'd go; but the father an' mother would not allow iv it be no manes. An' so in less time than you'd be thinkin' about it, the colonel had him polished off into a a rale elegant soger, wid his gun exercise, and his bagnet exercise, and his small sword, and broad sword, and pistol and dagger, an' all the rest, an' then away wid him on boord a man-a-war to furrin parts, to fight for King George agin Bonyparty, that was great in them times. Well, it was very soon in every one's mouth how Billy Malowney was batin' all before him, astonishin' the ginerals, an frightenin' the inemy to that degree, there was not a Frinchman dare say parley voo outside of the rounds iv his camp.

You may be sure Molly was proud iv that same, though she never spoke a word about it; until at last the news kem home that Billy Malowney was surrounded an' murdered be the Frinch army, under Napoleon Bonyparty himself. The news was brought by Jack Bryan Dhas, the peddlar, that said he met the corporal iv the regiment on the quay iv Limerick, an' how he brought him into a public-house and thrated him to a naggin, and got all the news about poor Billy Malowney out iv him while they war dhrinkin' it; an' a sorrowful story it was.

The way it happened, accordin' as the corporal tould him, was jist how the Jook iv Wellington detarmined to fight a rale tarin' battle wid the Frinch, and Bonyparty at the same time was aiqually detarmined to fight the divil's own scrimmidge wid the British foorces. Well, as soon as the business was pretty near ready at both sides, Bonaparty and the general next undher himself gets up behind a bush, to look at their inimies through spy-glasses, and thry would they know any iv them at the distance.

"Bedad," says the gineral, afther a divil iv a long spy, "I'd bet half a piht," says he, "that's Bill Malowney himself," says he, "down there," says he.

"Och," says Bonypart, "do you tell me so?" says he—"I'm fairly heart-scalded with that same Billy Malowney," says he; "an' I think if I was wanst shut iv him, I'd bate the rest iv them aisy," says he.

"I'm thinking so myself," says the gineral, says he; "but he's a tough bye," says he.

"Tough!" says Bonypart, "he's the divil," says he.

"Begorra, I'd be better plased," says the gineral, says he, "to take himself than the Duke iv Willinton," says he, "an' Sir Edward Blakeney into the bargain," says he.

"The Duke of Wellinton and Gineral Blakeney," says Bonypart, "is great for planning, no doubt," says he; "but Billy Malowney's the boy for *action*," says he—"an' action's everything, just now," says he.

So wid that Bonypart pushes up his cocked hat, and begins scratching his head, and thinking and considherin' for the bare life, and at last says he to the gineral—

"Gineral Commandher iv all the Foorces," says he, "I've hot it," says he: "ordher out the forlorn hope," says he, "an' give them as much powdher, both glazed and blasting," says he, "an' as much bullets, do ye mind, an' swan-dhrops an' chain-shot," says he, "an' all soorts iv waipons an' combustables as they can carry; an' let them surround Bill Malowney," says he, "an' if they can get any soort

iv an advantage," says he, "let them knock him to smithereens," says he, "an' then take him presner," says he, "an' tell all the bandmen iv the Frinch army," says he, "to play up 'Garryowen,' to keep up their sperits," says he, "all the time they're advancin';" an' you may promise them anything you like in my name," says he; "for, by my sowl, I don't think its many iv them 'ill come back to throuble us," says he, winkin' at him.

So away with the gineral, an' he ordhers out the forlorn hope, an' tells the band to play, an' everything else, just as Bonypart desired him; an' sure enough, whin Billy Malowney heerd the music where he was standin' taking a blast of the dhudheen to compose his mind for murdherin' the Frinchmen as usual, being mighty partial to that tune intirely, he cocks his ear a one side, an' down he stoops to listen to the music; but, begorra, who should be in his rare all the time but a Frinch grannideer behind a bush, and seeing him stooped in a convanient forum, bedad he let flies at him sthraight, and fired him right forward between the legs an the small iv the back, glory be to God, with what they call (saving your presence) a bumshell. Well, Bill Malowney let one roar out iv him, an' away he rowled over the field iv battle like a slitther (as Boneypart and the Duke iv Wellington, that was watching the manœuvres from a distance, both consayved) into glory. An' sure enough the Frinch was overjoyed beyant all bounds, an' small blame to them—an' the Duke of Wellington, I'm toult, was never all out the same man sinst. At any rate, the news kem home how Billy Malowney was murdhered by the Frinch in forrin parts.

Well, all this time, you may be sure, there was no want iv boys comin' to coort purty Molly Donovan; but one way ar another, she always kept puttin' them off constant; an' though her father and mother was nathurally anxious to get rid of her respickably, they did not like to marry her off in spite iv her teeth. An' this way, promising one while and puttin' it off another, she conthrived to get on from one Shrove to another, until near seven years was over and gone from the time when Billy Malowney listed for forrin sarvice.

It was nigh hand a year from the time whin the news iv Leum-a-rinka bein' killed by the Frinch came home, an' in place iv forgettin' him, as the saisins wint over, it's what Molly was growin' paler and more lonesome every day, antil the neighbours thought she was fallin' into a decline; and this is the way it was with her whin the fair of Lisnamoe kem round. It was a beautiful evenin', just at the time iv the reapin' iv the oats, and the sun was shinin' through the red clouds far away over the hills iv Cahirmore. Her father an' mother, an' the boys an' girls, was all away down in the fair, and Molly sittin' all alone on the step of the style, listening to the foolish little birds whistlin' among the leaves—and the sound of the mountain-river flowin' through the stones an' bushes—an' the crows flyin' home high over head to the woods iv Glinvarlogh—an' down in the glen, far away, she could see the fair-green iv Lisnamoe in the mist, an' sunshine among the grey rocks and threes—an' the cows, an' the horses, an' the blue frieze, an' the red cloaks, an' the tents, an' the smoke, an' the ould round tower—all as soft an' as sorrowful as a dhrame iv ould times.

An' while she was looking this way, an' thinking iv Leum-a-rinka—poor Bill iv the dance, that was sleepin' in his lonesome glory in the fields iv Spain—she began to sing the song he used to like so well in the ould times—

"Shule, shule, shule a-roon"—

an' when she ended the verse, what do you think but she heard a manly voice just at the other side iv the hedge, singing the last words over again. Well she knew it; her heart flutthered up like a little bird that id be wounded, and then dhropped still in her breast. It was himself. In a minute he was through the hedge and standing before her.

"Leum!" says she.

"Mavourneen cuishla machree!" says he; and without another word, they were locked in one another's arms.

Well, it id only be nansinse for me thryin' an' tell ye all the foolish things they said, and how they looked in one another's faces, an' laughed, an' cried, an' laughed again; and how, when they came to themselves, and she was able at last to believe it was raly Billy

himself that was there, actially houldin' her hand, and lookin' in her eyes the same way as ever, barrin' he was browner and boulder, an' did not, maybe, look quite as merry in himself as he used to do in former times—an' fondher for all, an' more lovin' than ever—how he tould her all about the wars wid the Frinchmen—an' how he was wounded, and left for dead in the field iv battle, bein' shot through the breast, and how he was discharged, an' got a pinsion iv a full shillin' a day—and how he was come back to live the rest iv his days in the sweet glen iv Lisnamoe, an' (if only *she'd* consint) to marry herself in spite iv them all.

Well, ye may aisily think, they had plinty to talk about, afther seven years without once seein' one another; and so signs on, the time flew by as swift an' as pleasant as a bird on the wing, an' the sun wint down, an' the moon shone sweet an' soft instead, an' they two never knew a ha'porth about it, but kept talkin' an' whisperin', an' whisperin' and talkin'; for it's wondherful how often a tindher-hearted girl will bear to hear a purty boy tellin' her the same story constant over an' over, ontil at last, sure enough, they heerd the ould man himself comin' up the boreen, singin' the "Colleen Rue"—a thing he never done barrin' whin he had a dhrop in; an' the misthress walkin' in front iv him, an' two illigant Kerry cows he just bought in the fair, and the sarvint boys dhrivin' them behind.

"Oh, blessed hour!" says Molly, "here's my father,"

"I'll spake to him this minute," says Bill.

"Oh, not for the world, says she—"he's singing the 'Colleen Rue,'" says she, "and no one dar raison with him," says she.

"An' where 'ill I go, thin," says he, "for they're into the haggard an top iv us," says he, "an' they'll see me iv I lep through the hedge," says he.

"Thry the pig-sty," says she, "mavourneen," says she, "in the name iv God," says she.

"Well, darlint," says he, "for your sake," says he, "I'll condescend to them animals," says he.

An' wid that he makes a dart to get in, bud, begorra, it was too late—the pigs was all gone home, and the pig-sty was as full as the Burr coach wid six inside.

"Och! blur-an-agers," says he, "there is not room for a suckin' pig," says he; "let alone a Christian," says he.

"Well, run into the house, Billy," says she, "this minute," says she, "an' hide yourself antil they're quiet," says she, "an' thin you can steal out," says she, "an-knownst to them all," says she.

"I'll do your biddin," says he, "Molly asthore," says he.

"Run in thin," says she, "an' I'll go an' meet them," says she.

So wid that away wid her, and in wint Billy, and where 'id he hide himself bud in a little closet that was off iv the room, where the ould man an' woman slep'; so he closed the doore, and sot down in an ould chair he found there convanient. Well, he was not well in it when all the rest iv them comes into the kitchen, an' ould Tim Donovan singin' the "Colleen Rue" for the bare life, and the rest iv thim sthrivin' to humour him, and doin' exactly everything he bid them, because they seen he was foolish be the manes iv the liquor.

Well, to be sure all this kep' them long enough, you may be sure, from goin' to bed, so that Billy could get no manner iv an advantage to get out iv the house, and so he sted, sittin' in the dark closet in state, cursin' the "Colleen Rue," and wondherin' to the divil whin they'd get the ould man into his bed; an' as if that was not delay enough, who should come in to stop for the night but Father O'Flaherty, of Cahirmore, that was buyin' a horse at the fair, an', av course, there was a bed to be med down for his raverence, and some other attintions; an' a long discoorse himself an' ould Mrs. Donovan had about the slaughter iv Billy Malowney an' how he was buried on the field iv battle; and his raverence hoped he got a decent funeral, an' all the other convaniencies iv religion; an' so you may suppose it was pretty late in the night before all iv them got to their beds.

Well, Tim Donovan could not settle to sleep at all at all, and so he kep' discoorsin' the wife about the new cows he bought, an' the stripphers he sould, an' so an for betther than an hour, ontil from one thing to another he kem to talk about the pigs, an' the poulthry, and at last having nothing betther to discoorse about, he begun at his daughter Molly, an' all the heartscald

she was to him be raison iv refusin' the men, an' at last, says he, "I onderstand," says he, "very well, how it is," says he; "it's how she was in love," says he, "wid that bliggard, Billy Malowney," says he, "bad luck to him," says he, for by this time he was coming to his raison.

"Ah!" says the wife, says she, "Tim, darlint, don't be cursin' them that's dead an' buried," says she.

"An' why would not I?" says he, "if they desarve it," says he.

"Whisht," says she, "an' listen to that," says she; "in the name of the Blessed Vargin," says she, "what *is* it?" says she.

An' sure enough what was it bud Bill Malowney that was dhroppin' asleep in the closet, an' snorin' like a church organ.

"Is it a pig," says he, "or is it a Christian?"

"Arra! listen to the tune iv it," says she; "sure a pig never done the like iv that," says she.

"Whatever it is," says he, "it's in the room wid us," says he. "The Lord be marciful to us," says he.

"I tould you not to be cursin'," says she; "bad luck to you," says she, "for an omnadhaun," for she was a very religious woman in herself.

"Sure he's burried in Spain," says he; "an' it is not for one little innocent expression," says he, "he'd be comin' all that a way to annoy the house," says he.

Well, while they war talkin' Bill turns in the way he was sleepin' into an aisier imposture, and as soon as he stopped snorin' ould Tim Donovan's courage riz agin, and, says he, "I'll go to the kitchen," says he, "an' light a rish," says he. An' with that away wid him, an' the wife kep workin' the beads all the time, an' before he kem back, Bill was snorin' as loud as ever.

"Oh! bloody wars—I mane the blessed saints about us—that deadly sound," says he, "it's goin' on as lively as ever," says he.

"I'm as wake as a rag," says his wife, says she, "wid the fair anasiness," says she; "it's out iv the little closet it's comin'," says she.

"Say your prayers," says he, "an' hould your tongue," says he, "while I discoorse it," says he; "an' who are ye?" says he, "in the name iv all the holy saints," says he, givin' the door a dab iv a crusheen that wakened Bill inside. "I ax," says he, "who are you?" says he.

Well, Bill did not rightly remember where in the world he was, but he pushed open the door, an' says he, "Billy Malowney's my name," says he, "an' I'll thank ye to tell me a betther," says he.

Well, whin Tim Donovan heard that, an' actially seen that it was Bill himself that was in it, he had not strength enough to let a bawl out iv him, but he dhropt the candle out iv his hand, an' down wid himself on his back in the dark. Well, the wife let a screech you'd hear at the Mill iv Killraghlin, an'—

"Oh," says she, "the spirit has him, body an' bones," says she; "Oh, holy St. Bridget—oh, Mother iv Marcy—oh, Father O'Flaherty," says she, screechin' murdher from out iv her bed.

Well, Bill Malowny was not a minute remimberin' himself, an' so out wid him quite an' aisy, an' through the kitchen; bud in place iv the door iv the house, its what he kem to the door iv Father O'Flaherty's little room, where he was jist waknin' wid the noise iv the screechin' an' batherin'; an' bedad, Bill makes no more about it, but he jumps, wid one boult, clever an' clane into his raverance's bed.

"What do ye mane, you uncivilised bliggard?" says his raverance; "is that a venerable way," says he, "to approach your clargy?" says he.

"Hould your tongue," says Bill, "an' I'll do ye no harum," says he.

"Who are you, ye scoundhrel iv the world?" says his raverence.

"Whisht," says he, "I'm Billy Malowny," says he.

"You lie," says his raverence—for he was frightened beyont all bearin'—an' he makes bud one jump out iv the bed at the wrong side, where there was only jist a little place in the wall for a press, an' his raverence could not as much as turn in it for the wealth iv kingdoms; "you lie," says he; "but for feared its the truth you're tellin," says he, "here's at ye in the name iv all the blessed saints together," says he; an' wid that, my dear, he blazes away at him wid a Latin prayer iv the strongest description; an' as he said himself afterwards, that was iv a

nature that id dbrive the divil himself up the chimley like a puff iv tobacky smoke, wid his tail betune his legs.

"Arra what are ye sthrivin' to say," says Bill; says he, "if ye don't hould your tongue," says he, "wid your parly voo," says he, "it's what I'll put my thumb on your windpipe," says he, "an' Billy Malowney never wint back iv his word yet," says he.

"Thundher-an-owns," says his raverence, says he—seein' the Latin took no infect on him, at all at all, an' screechin' that you'd think he'd rise the thatch up iv the house wid the fair fright—"and tundher and blazes, boys, will none iv yes come here wid a candle, but lave your clargy to be choked by a spirit in the dark," says he.

Well, be this time the sarvint boys, and the rest iv them wor up an' half dressed, an' in they all run, one on top iv another, wid pitchforks and spades, thinkin it was only what his raverence slep' a dhrame iv the like, by means iv the punch he was afther takin' just before he rowl'd himself into the bed. But, begorra, whin they seen it was raly Bill Malowney himself that was in it, it was only who'd be foremost out agin, tumblin' backways, one over another, and his raverence roarin' an' cursin' them like mad for not waitin' for him.

Well, my dear, it was betther than half an hour before Billy Malowney could explain to them all how it raly was himself, for begorra they were all iv them persuadin' him that he was a sperit to that degree it's a wondher he did not give into it, if it was only to put a stop to the argiment.

Well, his raverence tould the ould people then, there was no use in sthrivin' agin the will iv Providence an' the vagaries iv love united; an' whin they kem to undherstand to a sartinty how Billy had a shillin' a-day for the rest iv his days, begorra they took rather a likin' to him, and considhered at wanst how he must have riz out of all his nansinse entirely, or his gracious Majesty id never have condescinded to show him his countenance that way every day iv his life, on a silver shillin.' An' so, begorra they never stopt till it was all settled—an' there was not sich a weddin as that in the counthry sinst. It's more than forty years ago, an' though I was no more nor a gossoon myself, I remimber it like yestherday. Molly never looked so purty before, an' Billy Malowney was plisant beyont all hearin', to that degree that half the girls in it was fairly tarin' mad—only they would not let on—they had not him to themselves in place iv her. An' begorra I'd be a feared to tell ye, because you would not believe me, since that blessid man Father Mathew put an end to all soorts of sociality, the Lord reward him, how many gallons iv pottieen whiskey was dhrank upon that most solemn and tindher occasion? Pat Hanlon, the piper, had a faver out iv it; an' Neddy Shawn Héigue, mountin' his horse the wrong way, broke his collar-bone, by the manes iv fallin' over his tail while he was feelin' for his head; an' P'ayther Brian, the horse-doether, I am tould, was never quite right in the head ever afther; an' ould Tim Donovan was singin' the "Colleen Rue" night and day for a full week; an' begorra the weddin' was only the foundation iv fun, and the beginnin' iv divarsion, for there was not a year for ten years afther, an' more, but brought round a christenin' as regular as the sasins revarted.

A NIGHT IN THE BELL INN.

Though few men are themselves on visiting terms with their ancestors, most are furnished with one or two decently-authenticated ghost stories. I myself am a firm believer in spectral phenomena, for reasons which I may, perhaps, be tempted to give to the public whenever the custom of printing in folio shall have been happily revived; meanwhile, as they will not bear compression, I keep them by me, and content myself with now and then stating a fact, leaving the theory to suggest itself.

Now it has always appeared to me that the apostles of spectres (if the phrase will be allowed me) have, like other men with a mission, been, perhaps, a little precipitate in assuming their facts, and sometimes find "true ghosts" upon evidence much too slender to satisfy the hard-hearted and unbelieving generation we live in. They have thus brought scandal not only upon the useful class to which they belong, but upon the world of spirits itself—causing ghosts to be so generally discredited, that fifty visits made in their usual private and confidential way, will now hardly make a single convert beyond the individual favoured with the interview; and, in order to reinstate themselves in their former position, they will be obliged henceforward to appear at noon-day, and in places of public resort.

The reader will perceive, then, that I am convinced of the equal impolicy and impropriety of resting the claims of my clients (ghosts in general) upon facts which will not stand the test of an impartial, and even a sceptical scrutiny. And, perhaps, I cannot give a happier illustration of the temper of my philosophy, at once candid and cautious, than is afforded by the following relation, for every tittle of which I solemnly pledge my character at once as a gentleman and a metaphysician.

There is a very agreeable book by Mrs. Crowe, entitled "The Night Side of Nature," and which, among a *dubia cæna* of authentic tales of terror, contains several which go to show the very trivial causes which have from time to time caused the re-appearance of departed spirits in this grosser world. A certain German professor, for instance, actually *persecuted* an old college friend with preternatural visitations for no other purpose, as it turned out, than to procure a settlement of some small six-and-eightpenny accounts, which he owed among his tradespeople at the time of his death. I could multiply, from my own notes, cases still odder, in which sensible and rather indolent men, too, have been at the trouble to re-cross the awful interval between us and the invisible, for purposes apparently still less important—so trivial, indeed, that for the present I had rather not mention them, lest I should expose their memories to the ridicule of the unreflecting. I shall now proceed to my narrative, with the repeated assurance, that the reader will nowhere find in it a single syllable that is not most accurately and positively true.

About four-and-thirty years ago I was travelling through Denbighshire upon a mission which needed despatch. I had, in fact, in my charge some papers which were required for the legal preliminaries to a marriage which was about to take place in a family of consideration, upon the borders of that county.

The season was winter, but the weather delightful—that is to say, clear and frosty; and, even without foliage, the country through which I posted was beautiful. The subject of my journey was a pleasant one. I anticipated an agreeable visit, and a cordial welcome; and the weather and scenery were precisely of the sort to second the cheerful associations with which my excursion had been undertaken. Let no one, therefore, suggest that I was predisposed for the reception of gloomy or horrible impressions. When the sun set we had a splendid moon, at once soft and brilliant; and I pleased myself with watching the altered, and, if possible, more beautiful effects of the scenery through which we were smoothly rolling. I was to put up for the night at the little town of ——; and on reaching the hill—

over which the approach to it is conducted, about a short mile from its quaint little street—I dismounted, and directing the postillion to walk his jaded horses leisurely up the winding road, I trod on before him in the pleasant moonlight, and sharp bracing air. A little by-path led directly up the steep acclivity, while the carriage-road more gradually ascended by a wide sweep—this little path, leading through fields and hedgerows, I followed, intending to anticipate the arrival of my conveyance at the summit of the hill.

I had not proceeded very far when I found myself close to a pretty old church, whose ivied tower, and countless diamond window-panes, were glittering in the moonbeams—a high, irregular hedge, overtopped by tall and ancient trees, enclosed it; and rows of funereal yews shewed black and mournful among the wan array of headstones that kept watch over the village dead. I was so struck with the glimpse I had caught of the old churchyard, that I could not forbear mounting the little style that commanded it—no scene could be imagined more still and solitary. Not a human habitation was near—every sign and sound of life was reverently remote; and this old church, with its silent congregation of the dead marshalled under its walls, seemed to have spread round it a circle of stillness and desertion that pleased, while it thrilled me.

No sound was here audible but the softened rush of waters, and that sweet note of home and safety, the distant baying of the watch-dog—now and then broken by the sharper rattle of the carriage-wheels upon the dry road. But while I looked upon the sad and solemn scene before me, these sounds were interrupted by one which startled, and, indeed, for a moment, froze me with horror. The sound was a cry, or rather a howl of despairing terror, such as I have never heard before or since uttered by human voice. It broke from the stillness of the churchyard; but I saw no figure from which it proceeded—though this circumstance, indeed, was scarcely wonderful, as the broken ground, the trees, tall weeds, and tomb-stones afforded abundant cover for any person who might have sought concealment. This cry of unspeakable agony was succeeded by a silence; and, I confess, my heart throbbed strangely, when the same voice articulated, in the same tone of agony,—

"Why will you trouble the dead? Who can torment us before the time? I will come to you in my flesh, though after my skin worms destroy this body—and you shall speak to me, face to face."

This strange address was followed by a another cry of despair, which died away as suddenly as it was raised.

I never could tell why it was I was not more horror-stricken than I really was by this mysterious, and, all things considered, even terrible interpolation. It was not until the silence had again returned, and the faint rustling of the frosty breeze among the crisp weeds crept towards me like the stealthy approach of some unearthly influence, that I felt a superstitious terror gradually inspire me, which hurried me at an accelerated pace from the place. A few minutes, and I heard the friendly voice of my charioteer hallooing to me from the summit of the hill.

Reassured, as I approached him, I abated my speed.

"I saw you standing on the stile, sir, by the churchyard," he said, as I drew near, "and I ask your pardon for not giving you the hint before, but they say it is not lucky; and I called to you loud and lusty to come away, sir; but I see you are nothing the worse of it."

"Why, what is there to be afraid of there, my good fellow?" I asked, affecting as much indifference as I was able.

"Why, sir," said the man, throwing an uneasy look in the direction, "they do say there's a bad spirit haunts it; and nobody in these parts would go near it after dark for love or money."

"Haunted!" I repeated; "and how does the spirit shew himself?" I asked.

"Oh! lawk, sir, in all sorts of shapes—sometimes like an old woman a'most doubled in two with years," he answered—"sometimes like a little child agoing along a full foot high above the grass of the graves; and sometimes like a big black ram, strutting on his hind legs, and with a pair of eyes like live coals; and some has seen him in the shape of a man, with his arm raised up towards the sky, and his head hang-

ing down, as if his neck was broke. I can't think of half the shapes he has took at different times; but they're all bad: the very child, they say—when he comes in that shape—has the face of Satan—God bless us!—and nobody's ever the same again that sees him once."

By this time I was again seated in my vehicle, and some six or eight minutes' quick driving whirled us into the old-fashioned street, and brought the chaise to a full stop before the open door and well-lighted hall of the Bell Inn. To me there has always been an air of indescribable cheer and comfort about a substantial country hostelrie, especially when one arrives, as I did, upon a keen winter's night, with an appetite as sharp, and something of that sense of adventure and excitement which, before the days of down-trains and tickets, always, in a greater or less degree, gave a zest to travelling. Greeted with that warmest of welcomes for which inns, alas! are celebrated, I had soon satisfied the importunities of a keen appetite; and having for some hours taken mine ease in a comfortable parlour before a blazing fire, I began to feel sleepy, and betook myself to my no less comfortable bedchamber.

It is not to be supposed that the adventure of the churchyard had been obliterated from my recollection by the suppressed bustle and good cheer of the "Bell." On the contrary, it had occupied me almost incessantly during my solitary ruminations; and as the night advanced, and the stillness of repose and desertion stole over the old mansion, the sensations with which this train of remembrance and speculation was accompanied became anything but purely pleasant.

I felt, I confess, fidgety and queer—I searched the corners and recesses of the oddly-shaped and roomy old apartment—I turned the face of the looking-glass to the wall—I poked the fire into a roaring blaze—I looked behind the window-curtains, with a vague anxiety, to assure myself that nothing could be lurking there. The shutter was a little open, and the ivied tower of the little church, and the tufted tops of the trees that surrounded it, were visible over the slope of the intervening hill. I hastily shut out the unwelcome object, and in a mood of mind, I must confess, favourable enough to any freak my nerves might please to play me, I hurried through my dispositions for the night, humming a gay air all the time, to re-assure myself, and plunged into bed, extinguishing the candle, and—shall I acknowledge the weakness?—nearly burying my head under the blankets.

I lay awake some time, as men will do under such circumstances, but at length fatigue overcame me, and I fell into a profound sleep. From this repose I was, however, aroused in the manner I am about to describe. A very considerable interval must have intervened. There was a cold air in the room very unlike the comfortable atmosphere in which I had composed myself to sleep. The fire, though much lower than when I had gone to bed, was still emitting flame enough to throw a flickering light over the chamber. My curtains were, however, closely drawn, and I could not see beyond the narrow tent in which I lay.

There had been as I awaked a clanking among the fire-irons, as if a palsied hand was striving to arrange the fire, and this rather unaccountable noise continued for some seconds after I had become completely awake.

Under the impression that I was subjected to an accidental intrusion, I called out first in a gentle and afterwards in a sharper tone—

"Who's there?"

At the second summons the sounds ceased, and I heard instead the tread of naked feet, as it seemed to me, upon the floor, pacing to and fro, between the hearth and the bed in which I lay. A superstitious terror, which I could not combat, stole over me; with an effort I repeated my question, and drawing myself upright in the bed, expected the answer with a strange sort of trepidation. It came in terms and accompanied with accessaries which I shall not soon forget.

The very same tones which had so startled me in the churchyard the evening before, the very sounds which I had heard then and there, were now filling my ears, and spoken in the chamber where I lay.

"Why will you trouble the dead? Who can torment us before the time? I will come to you in my flesh, 'though after my skin worms destroy this body,' and you shall speak with me face to face."

As I live, I can swear the words and

the voice were the very same I had heard on the occasion I have mentioned, but (and mark this) repeated to *no one*. With feelings which I shall not attempt to describe, I heard the speaker approach the bed—a hand parted the bed-curtains and drew them open, revealing a form more horrible than my fancy had ever seen—an almost gigantic figure—naked, except for what might well have been the rotten remnant of a shroud—stood close beside my bed—livid and cadaverous grimed as it seemed with the dust of the grave, and staring on me with a gaze of despair, malignity, and fury too intense almost for human endurance.

I cannot say whether I spoke or not, but this infernal spectre answered me as if I had.

"I am dead and yet alive," it said—"the child of perdition—in the grave I am a murderer, but here I am APOLLYON. Fall down and worship me."

Having thus spoken, it stood for a moment at the bedside, and then turned away with a shuddering moan, and I lost sight of it, but after a few seconds it came again to the bedside as before.

"When I died they put me under Mervyn's tombstone, and they did not bury me. My feet lie toward the *west* —turn them to the east and I will rest —maybe I will rest—I will rest—rest—rest."

Again the figure was gone, and once again it returned, and said—

"I am your master—I am your resurrection and your life, and therefore, fall down and worship me."

It made a motion to mount upon the bed, but what further passed I know not, for I fainted.

I must have lain in this state for a long time, for when I became conscious the fire was almost extinct. For hours that seemed interminable I lay, scarcely daring to breathe, and afraid to get up lest I should encounter the hideous apparition, for aught I knew, lurking close beside me. I lay, therefore, in an agony of expectation such as I will not attempt to describe, awaiting the appearance of the daylight.

Gradually it came, and with it the cheerful and reassuring sounds of life and occupation. At length I mustered courage to reach the bell-rope, and having rung lustily, I plunged again into bed.

"Draw the window-curtains—open the shutters," I exclaimed as the man entered, and these orders executed, "look about the room," I added, "and see whether a cat or any other animal has got in."

There was nothing of the sort; and satisfied that my visitant was no longer in the chamber, I dismissed the man, and hurried through my toilet with breathless precipitation.

Hastening from the hated scene of my terrors, I escaped to the parlour, whither I instantly summoned the proprietor of "the Bell" in *propria persona*. I suppose I looked scared and haggard enough, for mine host looked upon me with an expression of surprise and inquiry.

"Shut the door," said I.

It was done.

"I have had an uneasy night in the room you assigned me, sir; I may say, indeed, a *miserable* night," I said.

"Pray," resumed I, interrupting his apologetic expressions of surprise, "has any person but myself ever complained of—of being *disturbed* in that room?"

"Never," he assured me.

I had suspected the ghastly old practical joke, so often played off by landlords in story-books, and fancied I might have been deliberately exposed to the chances of a "haunted chamber." But there was no acting in the frank look and honest denial of mine host.

"It is a very strange thing," said I, hesitating; "and I do not see why I should not tell you what has occurred. And as I could swear, if necessary, to the perfect reality of the entire scene, it behoves you, I think, to sift the matter carefully. For myself, I cannot entertain a doubt as to the nature of the truly terrible visitation to which I have been subjected; and, were I in your position, I should transfer my establishment at once to some other house as well suited to the purpose, and free from the dreadful liabilities of this.

I proceeded to detail the particulars of the occurrence of the past night, to which he listened with nearly as much horror as I recited them with.

"Mervyn's tomb!" he repeated after me; "why that's down there in L——r: the churchyard you can see from the window of the room you slept in."

"Let us go there instantly," I ex-

claimed, with an almost feverish anxiety to ascertain whether we should discover in the place indicated anything corroborative of the authenticity of my vision.

"Well, I shan't say no," said he, obviously bracing himself for an effort of courage; "but we'll take Faukes, and James the helper, with us; and please, sir, you'll not mention the circumstance as has occurred to either on 'em."

I gave him the assurance he asked for, and in a few minutes our little party were in full march upon the point of interest.

There had been an intense black frost, and the ground, reverberating to our tread with the hollow sound of a vault, emitted the only noise that accompanied our rapid advance. I and my host were too much preoccupied for conversation, and our attendants maintained a respectful silence. A few minutes brought us to the low, gray walls, and bleak hedgerows that surrounded the pretty old church, and all its melancholy and picturesque memorials.

"Mervyn's tomb lies there, I think, sir," he said, pointing to a corner of the churchyard, in which piles of rubbish, withered weeds, and brambles were thickly accumulated under the solemn, though imperfect, shelter of the wintry trees.

He exchanged some sentences with our attendants in Welch.

"Yes, sir, that's the place," he added, turning to me.

And as we all approached it, I bethought me that the direction in which, as I stood upon the stile, I had heard the voice on the night preceding, corresponded accurately with that indicated by my guides. The tomb in question was a huge slab of black marble, supported, as was made apparent when the surrounding brambles were removed, upon six pillars, little more than two feet high each. There was ample room for a human body to lie inside this funeral pent-house; and, on stooping to look beneath, I was unspeakably shocked to see that something like a human figure was actually extended there.

It was, indeed, a corpse—and, what is more, corresponded in every trait with the infernal phantom which, on the preceding night, had visited, and appalled me.

The body, though miserably emaciated, was that of a large-boned, athletic man, of fully six-feet-four in height; and it was, therefore, no easy task to withdraw it from the receptacle where it had been deposited, and lay it, as our assistants did, upon the tomb-stone which had covered it. Strange to say, moreover, the feet of the body, as we found it, had been placed toward the west.

As I looked upon this corpse, and recognised, but too surely, in its proportions and lineaments every trait of the apparition that had stood at my bed-side, with a countenance animated by the despair and malignity of the damned, my heart fluttered and sank within me, and I recoiled from the effigy of the demon with terror, second only to that which had thrilled me on the night preceding.

. . . . . .

Now reader—*honest* reader—I appeal to your own appreciation of testimony, and ask you, having these facts in evidence, and upon the deposition of an eye and ear witness—whose veracity, through a long life, has never once been compromised or questioned—have you, or have you not, in the foregoing story, a well-authenticated ghost story?

Before you answer the above question, however, it may be convenient to let you know certain other facts which were clearly established upon the inquest that was very properly held upon the body which in so strange a manner we had discovered.

I purposely avoid details, and without assigning the depositions respectively to the witnesses who made them, shall restrict myself to a naked outline of the evidence as it appeared.

The body I have described was identified as that of Abraham Smith, an unfortunate lunatic, who had, upon the day but one preceding, made his escape from the neighbouring parish workhouse, where he had been for many years confined. His hallucination was a strange, but not by any means an unprecedented one. He fancied that he had died, and was condemned; and, as these ideas alternately predominated, sometimes spoke of himself as an "evil spirit," and sometimes importuned his keepers to

"bury him"—using habitually certain phrases, which I had no difficulty in recognising as among those which he had addressed to me. He had been traced to the neighbourhood where his body was found, and had been seen and relieved scarcely half a mile from it about two hours before my visit to the churchyard! There were, further, unmistakeable evidences of some person's having climbed up the trellis-work to my window on the previous night—the shutter of which had been left unbarred, and, as the window might have been easily opened with a push, the cold which I experienced, as an accompaniment of the nocturnal visit, was easily accounted for. There was a mark of blood upon the window-stool, and a scrape upon the knee of the body corresponded with it. A multiplicity of other slight circumstances, and the positive assertion of the chamber-maid that the window had been opened, and was but imperfectly closed again, came in support of the conclusion, which was to my mind satisfactorily settled by the concurrent evidence of the medical men, to the effect that the unhappy man could not have been many hours dead when the body was found.

Taken in the mass, the evidence convinced me; and though I might still have clung to the preternatural theory, which, in the opinion of some persons, the facts of the case might still have sustained, I candidly decided with the weight of evidence, "gave up the ghost," and accepted the natural, but still somewhat horrible explanation of the occurrence. For this candour I take credit to myself. I might have stopped short at the discovery of the corpse, but I am no friend to "spurious gospels;" let our faith, whatever it is, be founded in honest fact. For my part, I steadfastly believe in ghosts, and have dozens of stories to support that belief; but this is not among them. Should I ever come, therefore, to tell you one, pray remember that you have to deal with a candid narrator.

SHAMUS O'BRIEN—A BALLAD.

THE following attempt to throw into metrical form, without departing from the southern Irish idiom, a legend of the troubles of '98, was written for a dear and gifted relative, and with a view to recitation, for which the author feels it to be much better suited than for presentation in cold type to a critical public. He relies, however, upon their good nature at least as much as he dreads their justice; and is also comforted by the following considerations: The friend whom he has mentioned gave a copy of the ballad to our fellow-countryman, Samuel Lover, immediately before his departure for America, and there, aided by those talents which make Mr. Lover's entertainments so delightful, its success was at once so flattering and decisive as to induce the author to place it at the disposal of his old friend, Anthony Poplar. It is unnecessary to say that had not the unlucky coincidence of the name of the hero and the subject of the ballad with certain incidents in the melancholy history of the last two years, made it unavailable, with propriety, for the purposes of public recitation in Ireland, the author would immeasurably have preferred sending the legend before his countrymen with the great and peculiar advantages it enjoyed at the other side of the water.

Such as it is, however, it is heartily at their service :—

Jist afther the war, in the year '98,
As soon as the boys wor all scattered and bate,
'Twas the custom, whenever a pisant was got,
To hang him by thrial—barrin' sich as was shot.
There was trial by jury goin' on by day-light,
And the martial-law hangin' the lavins by night.
It's them was hard times for an honest gossoon :
If he missed in the judges—he'd meet a dragoon ;
An' whether the sogers or judges gev sentence,
The divil a much time they allowed for repentance.
An' its many's the fine boy was then an his keepin',
Wid small share iv restin', or atin', or sleepin' ;
An' because they loved Erin, an' scorned to sell it,
A prey for the bloodhound, a mark for the bullet—
Unsheltered by night, and unrested by day,
With the heath for their barrack, revenge for their pay.
An' the bravest an' hardiest boy iv them all
Was Shamus O'Brien, from the town iv Glingall.
His limbs were well set, an' his body was light,
An' the keen-fangèd hound had not teeth half so white.
But his face was as pale as the face of the dead,
And his cheek never warmed with the blush of the red ;
An' for all that he wasn't an ugly young bye,
For the divil himself couldn't blaze with his eye,
So droll an' so wicked, so dark and so bright,
Like a fire-flash that crosses the depth of the night ;
An' he was the best mower that ever has been,
An' the illigantest hurler that ever was seen.
In finein' he gev Patrick Mooney a cut,
An' in jumpin' he bate Tim Malowney a fut ;
For lightness iv fut there was not his peer,
For, by gorra, he'd almost outrun the red deer ;
An' his dancin' was sich that the men used to stare,
An' the women turn crazy, he done it so quare ;
An', by gorra, the whole world gev it in to him there.
An' it's he was the boy that was hard to be caught,
An' it's often he run, an' it's often he fought,

An' it's many's the one can remimber right well
The quare things he done ; an' it's often I heerd tell
How he freckened the magisthrates in Cahirbally,
An' escaped through the sodgers in Aherloe Valley;
An' leathered the yeomen, himself agin' four,
An' stretched the two strongest on ould Galtimore.
But the fox must sleep sometimes, the wild deer must rest,
An' treachery prey on the blood iv the best.
Afther many a brave action of power and pride,
An' many a hard night on the mountain's bleak side,
An' a thousand great dangers and toils overpast,
In the darkness of night he was taken at last.
Now, Shamus, look back on the beautiful moon,
For the door of the prison must close on you soon,
An' take your last look at her dim lovely light,
That falls on the mountain and valley this night—
One look at the village, one look at the flood,
An' one at the shelthering, far-distant wood.
Farewell to the forest, farewell to the hill,
An' farewell to the friends that will think of you still;
Farewell to the patthern, the hurlin', an' wake,
And farewell to the girl that would die for your sake.
An' twelve sodgers brought him to Maryborough gaol,
An' the turnkey resaved him, refusin' all bail.
The fleet limbs wor chained, an' the sthrong hands wor bound,
An' he laid down his length on the could prison ground.
An' the dreams of his childhood kem over him there,
As gentle an' soft as the sweet summer air;
An' happy remembrances crowding on ever,
As fast as the foam-flakes dhrift down on the river,
Bringing fresh to his heart merry days long gone by,
Till the tears gathered heavy and thick in his eye.
But the tears didn't fall, for the pride of his heart
Would not suffer one drop down his pale cheek to start;
An' he sprang to his feet in the dark prison cave,
An' he swore with the fierceness that misery gave,
By the hopes of the good, an' the cause of the brave,
That when he was mouldering in the cold grave
His enemies never should have it to boast
His scorn of their vengeance one moment was lost;
His bosom might bleed, but his cheek should be dhry,
For undaunted he lived, and undaunted he'd *die*.

Well, as soon as a few weeks was over and gone,
The terrible day iv the thrial kem on;
There was sich a crowd there was scarce room to stand,
An' sogers on guard, an' dhragoons sword-in-hand;
An' the court-house so full that the people wor bothered,
An' attorneys an' criers on the pint iv bein' smothered;
An counsellors almost gev over for dead,
An' the jury sittin' up in their box over head;
An' the judge settled out so detarmined an' big,
With his gown on his back, and an illigant new wig;
An' silence was called, an' the minute it was said
The court was as still as the heart of the dead.
An' they heard but the openin' of one prison lock,
An' Shamus O'Brien kem into the dock.
For one minute he turned his eye round on the throng,
An' he looked at the bars, so firm and so strong,
An' he saw that he had not a hope, nor a friend,
A chance to escape, nor a word to defend:
An' he folded his arms as he stood there alone,
As calm and as cold as a statue of stone;

And they read a big writin', a yard long at laste,
An' Jim didn't undherstand it, nor mind it a taste.
An' the judge took a big pinch iv snuff, an' he says,
"Are you guilty or not, Jim O'Brien, av you plase?"

An' all held their breath in the silence of dhread,
An' Shamus O'Brien made answer, and said,
"My lord, if you ask me, if in my life time
I thought any treason, or did any crime
That should call to my cheek, as I stand alone here,
The hot blush of shame, or the coldness of fear,
Though I stood by the grave to receive my death blow,
Before God and the world I would answer you, no;
But if you would ask me, as I think it like,
If in the rebellion I carried a pike,
An' fought for ould Ireland from the first to the close,
An' shed the heart's blood of her bitterest foes,
I answer you, yes, an' I tell you again,
Though I stand here to perish, its my glory that then
In her cause I was willing my veins should run dhry,
An' that now for her sake I am ready to die."
Then the silence was great, an' the jury smiled bright,
An' the judge wasn't sorry the job was made light;
By my sowl, it's himself was the crabbed ould chap,
In a twinklin' he pulled on his ugly black cap.
Then Shamus' mother in the crowd standing by,
Called out to the judge with a pitiful cry,
"Oh, judge, darlin', don't, oh, don't say the word,
The crathur is young, have mercy, my lord;
He was foolish, he didn't know what he was doin'—
You don't know him, my lord, oh, don't give him to ruin—
He's the kindliest crathur, the tendherest-hearted—
Don't part us for ever, we that's so long parted.
Judge, mavourneen, forgive him, forgive him, my lord,
An' God will forgive you, oh, don't say the word!"
That was the first minute that O'Brien was shaken,
When he saw that he was not quite forgot or forsaken;
An' down his pale cheeks at the words of his mother,
The big tears wor runnin' fast, one afther th'other.
An' two or three times he endeavoured to spake,
But the sthrong manly voice used to falther and break;
But at last by the strength of his high-mounting pride,
He conquered and masthered his grief's swelling tide,
"An'," says he, "mother, darlin', don't break your poor heart,
For sooner or later the dearest must part;
And God knows it's betther than wandering in fear
On the bleak, trackless mountains among the wild deer,
To lie in the grave where the head, heart, and breast
From thought, labour, and sorrow for ever shall rest.
Then, mother, my darlin', don't cry any more,
Don't make me seem broken in this my last hour,
For I wish when my head's lyin' undher the raven,
No thrue man can say that I died like a craven!"
Then towards the judge Shamus bent down his head,
An' that minute the solemn death-sintence was said.
The mornin' was bright, an' the mists rose on high,
An' the lark whistled merrily in the clear sky—
But why are the men standin' idle so late?
An' why do the crowds gother fast in the street?
What come they to talk of? what come they to see?
An' why does the long rope hang from the cross-tree?

Oh! Shamus O'Brien pray fervent and fast,
May the saints take your soul, for this day is your last;
Pray fast an' pray strong, for the moment is nigh,
When sthrong, proud, an' great as you are, you must die.
An' fasther an' fasther the crowd gathered there,
Boys, horses and gingerbread, just like a fair;
An' whiskey was selling, an' cussamuck too,
And ould men and young women enjoying the view.
An' ould Tim Mulvany, he med the remark,
There was'nt sich a sight since the time of Noah's ark;
An' be gorra 'twas thrue for him, for divil such a scruge,
Sich divarshin and crowds was known since the deluge.
For thousands was gothered there, if there was one,
Waitin' till such time as the hangin' id come on;
At last they threw open the big prison gate,
An' out came the sheriffs and sodgers in state,
An' a cart in the middle, an' Shamus was in it;
Not paler, but prouder than ever, that minute.
An' as soon as the people saw Shamus O'Brien,
Wid prayin' and blessin, and all the girls cryin';
A wild wailin' sound kem on by degrees,
Like the sound of the lonesome wind blowin' thro' trees.
On, on to the gallows, the sheriffs are gone,
An' the cart an' the sodgers goes steadily on;
An' at every side swellin' around of the cart,
A wild sorrowful sound that 'id open your heart.
Now under the gallows the cart takes its stand,
An' the hangman gets up wid the rope in his hand;
An' the priest having blest him, goes down on the grouud,
An' Shamus O'Brien throws one last look round.
Then the hangman dhrew near, and the people grew still,
Young faces turned sickly, and warm hearts turn chill;
An' the rope bein' ready, his neck was made bare,
For the gripe iv the life-stranglin' cord to prepare:
An' the good priest has left him, havin' said his last prayer.
But the good priest done more, for his hands he unbound,
And with one daring spring Jim has leaped on the ground;
Bang, bang! goes the carbines, and clash goes the sabres,
He's not down! he's alive still! now stand to him neighbours.
Through the smoke and the horses he's into the crowd,
By the heavens he's free! than thunder more loud
By one shout from the people the heavens were shaken—
One shout that the dead of the world might awaken.
Your swords they may glitter, your carbines go bang,
But if you want hangin', its yourselves you must hang;
To night he'll be sleepin' in Aherloe Glin,
An' the divil's in the dice if you catch him again.
The sodgers ran this way, the sheriffs ran that,
An' father Malone lost his new Sunday hat;
An' the sheriffs wor both of them punished severely,
An' fined like the divil, because Jim done them fairly.

GHOST STORIES OF CHAPELIZOD.

TAKE my word for it there is no such thing as an ancient village, especially if it has seen better days, unillustrated by its legends of terror. You might as well expect to find a decayed cheese without mites, or an old house without rats, as an antique and dilapidated town without an authentic population of goblins. Now, although this class of inhabitants are in nowise amenable to the police authorities, yet as their demeanour directly affects the comforts of her Majesty's subjects, I cannot but regard it as a grave omission that the public have hitherto been left without any statistical returns of their numbers, activity, &c., &c. And I am persuaded that a Commission to inquire into and report upon the numerical strength, habits, haunts, &c., &c., of supernatural agents resident in Ireland, would be a great deal more innocent and entertaining than half the Commissions for which the country pays, and at least as instructive. This I say, more from a sense of duty, and to deliver my mind of a grave truth, than with any hope of seeing the suggestion adopted. But, I am sure, my readers will deplore with me that the comprehensive powers of belief, and apparently illimitable leisure, possessed by parliamentary commissions of inquiry, should never have been applied to the subject I have named, and that the collection of that species of information should be confided to the gratuitous and desultory labours of individuals, who, like myself, have other occupations to attend to. This, however, by the way.

Among the village outposts of Dublin, Chapelizod once held a considerable, if not a foremost rank. Without mentioning its connexion with the history of the great Kilmainham Preceptory of the Knights of St. John, it will be enough to remind the reader of its ancient and celebrated Castle, not one vestige of which now remains, and of the fact that it was for, we believe, some centuries, the summer residence of the Viceroys of Ireland. The circumstance of its being up, we believe, to the period at which that corps was disbanded, the head-quarters of the Royal Irish Artillery, gave it also a consequence of an humbler, but not less substantial kind. With these advantages in its favour, it is not wonderful that the

town exhibited at one time an air of substantial and semi-aristocratic prosperity unknown to Irish villages in modern times.

A broad street, with a well-paved foot-path, and houses as lofty as were at that time to be found in the fashionable streets of Dublin; a goodly stone-fronted barrack; an ancient church, vaulted beneath, and with a tower clothed from its summit to its base with the richest ivy; an humble Roman Catholic chapel; a steep bridge spanning the Liffey, and a great old mill at the near end of it, were the principal features of the town. These, or at least most of them, remain, but still the greater part in a very changed and forlorn condition. Some of them indeed superseded, though not obliterated by modern erections, such as the bridge, the chapel, and the church in part; the rest forsaken by the order who originally raised them, and delivered up to poverty, and in some cases to absolute decay.

The village lies in the lap of the rich and wooded Valley of the Liffey, and is overlooked by the high grounds of the beautiful Phœnix Park on the one side, and by the ridge of the Palmerstown hills on the other. Its situation, therefore, is eminently picturesque; and factory-fronts and chimneys notwithstanding, it has, I think, even in its decay, a sort of melancholy picturesqueness of its own. Be that as it may, I mean to relate two or three stories of that sort which may be read with very good effect by a blazing fire on a shrewd winter's night, and are all directly connected with the altered and somewhat melancholy little town I have named. The first I shall relate concerns

THE VILLAGE BULLY.

About thirty years ago there lived in the town of Chapelizod an ill-conditioned fellow of herculean strength, well known throughout the neighbourhood by the title of Bully Larkin. In addition to his remarkable physical superiority, this fellow had acquired a degree of skill as a pugilist which alone would have made him formidable. As it was, he was the autocrat of the village, and carried not the sceptre in vain. Conscious of his superiority, and perfectly secure of impunity, he lorded it over his fellows in a spirit of cowardly and brutal insolence, which made him hated even more profoundly than he was feared.

Upon more than one occasion he had deliberately forced quarrels upon men whom he had singled out for the exhibition of his savage prowess; and in every encounter his over-matched antagonist had received an amount of "punishment" which edified and appalled the spectators, and in some instances left ineffaceable scars and lasting injuries after it.

Bully Larkin's pluck had never been fairly tried. For, owing to his prodigious superiority in weight, strength, and skill, his victories had always been certain and easy; and in proportion to the facility with which he uniformly smashed an antagonist, his pugnacity and insolence were inflamed. He thus became an odious nuisance in the neighbourhood, and the terror of every mother who had a son, and of every wife who had a husband who possessed a spirit to resent insult, or the smallest confidence in his own pugilistic capabilities.

Now it happened that there was a young fellow named Ned Moran—better known by the *soubriquet* of "Long Ned," from his slender, lathy proportions—at that time living in the town. He was, in truth, a mere lad, nineteen years of age, and fully twelve years younger than the stalwarth bully. This, however, as the reader will see, secured for him no exemption from the dastardly provocations of the ill-conditioned pugilist. Long Ned, in an evil hour, had thrown eyes of affection upon a certain buxom damsel, who, notwithstanding Bully Larkin's amorous rivalry, inclined to reciprocate them.

I need not say how easily the spark of jealousy, once kindled, is blown into a flame, and how naturally, in a coarse and ungoverned nature, it explodes in acts of violence and outrage.

"The bully" watched his opportunity, and contrived to provoke Ned Moran, while drinking in a public-house with a party of friends, into an altercation, in the course of which he failed not to put such insults upon his rival as manhood could not tolerate. Long Ned, though a simple, good-natured sort of fellow, was by no means deficient in spirit, and retorted in a

tone of defiance which edified the more timid, and gave his opponent the opportunity he secretly coveted.

Bully Larkin challenged the heroic youth, whose pretty face he had privately consigned to the mangling and bloody discipline he was himself so capable of administering. The quarrel, which he had himself contrived to get up, to a certain degree covered the ill blood and malignant premeditation which inspired his proceedings, and Long Ned, being full of generous ire and whiskey punch, accepted the gauge of battle on the instant. The whole party, accompanied by a mob of idle men and boys, and in short by all who could snatch a moment from the calls of business, proceeded in slow procession through the old gate into the Phœnix Park, and mounting the hill overlooking the town, selected near its summit a level spot on which to decide the quarrel.

The combatants stripped, and a child might have seen in the contrast presented by the slight, lank form and limbs of the lad, and the muscular and massive build of his veteran antagonist, how desperate was the chance of poor Ned Moran.

"Seconds" and "bottle-holders"—selected of course for their love of the game—were appointed, and "the fight" commenced.

I will not shock my readers with a description of the cool-blooded butchery that followed. The result of the combat was what anybody might have predicted. At the eleventh round, poor Ned refused to "give in;" the brawny pugilist, unhurt, in good wind, and pale with concentrated and as yet unslaked revenge, had the gratification of seeing his opponent seated upon his second's knee, unable to hold up his head, his left arm disabled; his face a bloody, swollen, and shapeless mass; his breast scarred and bloody, and his whole body panting and quivering with rage and exhaustion.

"Give in Ned, my boy," cried more than one of the by-standers.

"Never, never," shrieked he, with a voice hoarse and choking.

Time being "up," his second placed him on his feet again. Blinded with his own blood, panting and staggering, he presented but a helpless mark for the blows of his stalwarth opponent. It was plain that a touch would have been sufficient to throw him to the earth. But Larkin had no notion of letting him off so easily. He closed with him without striking a blow (the effect of which, prematurely dealt, would have been to bring him at once to the ground, and so put an end to the combat), and getting his battered and almost senseless head under his arm, fast in that peculiar "fix" known to the fancy pleasantly by the name of "chancery," he held him firmly, while with monotonous and brutal strokes he beat his fist, as it seemed, almost into his face. A cry of "shame" broke from the crowd, for it was plain that the beaten man was now insensible, and supported only by the herculean arm of the bully. The round and the fight ended by his hurling him upon the ground, falling upon him at the same time with his knee upon his chest.

The bully rose, wiping the perspiration from his white face with his blood-stained hands, but Ned lay stretched and motionless upon the grass. It was impossible to get him upon his legs for another round. So he was carried down, just as he was, to the pond which then lay close to the old Park gate, and his head and body were washed beside it. Contrary to the belief of all he was not dead. He was carried home, and after some months to a certain extent recovered. But he never held up his head again, and before the year was over he had died of consumption. Nobody could doubt how the disease had been induced, but there was no actual proof to connect the cause and effect, and the ruffian Larkin escaped the vengeance of the law. A strange retribution, however, awaited him.

After the death of Long Ned, he became less quarrelsome than before, but more sullen and reserved. Some said "he took it to heart," and others, that his conscience was not at ease about it. Be this as it may, however, his health did not suffer by reason of his presumed agitations, nor was his worldly prosperity marred by the blasting curses with which poor Moran's enraged mother pursued him; on the contrary, he had rather risen in the world, and obtained regular and well-remunerated employment from the Chief Secretary's gardener, at the other side of the Park. He still lived in Chapelizod, whither, on the close of his day's work, he used to return across the Fifteen Acres.

It was about three years after the catastrophe we have mentioned, and

late in the autumn, when, one night, contrary to his habit, he did not appear at the house where he lodged, neither had he been seen anywhere, during the evening, in the village. His hours of return had been so very regular, that his absence excited considerble surprise, though, of course, no actual alarm; and, at the usual hour, the house was closed for the night, and the absent lodger consigned to the mercy of the elements, and the care of his presiding star. Early in the morning, however, he was found lying in a state of utter helplessness upon the slope immediately overlooking the Chapelizod gate. He had been smitten with a paralytic stroke: his right side was dead; and it was many weeks before he had recovered his speech sufficiently to make himself at all understood.

He then made the following relation:—He had been detained, it appeared, later than usual, and darkness had closed before he commenced his homeward walk across the Park. It was a moonlit night, but masses of ragged clouds were slowly drifting across the heavens. He had not encountered a human figure, and no sounds but the softened rush of the wind sweeping through bushes and hollows met his ear. These wild and monotonous sounds, and the utter solitude which surrounded him, did not, however, excite any of those uneasy sensations which are ascribed to superstition, although he said he did feel depressed, or, in his own phraseology, "lonesome." Just as he crossed the brow of the hill which shelters the town of Chapelizod, the moon shone out for some moments with unclouded lustre, and his eye, which happened to wander by the shadowy enclosures which lay at the foot of the slope, was arrested by the sight of a human figure climbing, with all the haste of one pursued, over the church-yard wall, and running up the steep ascent directly towards him. Stories of "resurrectionists" crossed his recollection, as he observed this suspicious-looking figure. But he began, momentarily, to be aware, with a sort of fearful instinct which he could not explain, that the running figure was directing his steps, with a sinister purpose, towards himself.

The form was that of a man with a loose coat about him, which, as he ran, he disengaged, and as well as Larkin could see, for the moon was again wading in clouds, threw from him. The figure thus advanced until within some two score yards of him; it arrested its speed, and approached with a loose, swaggering gait. The moon again shone out bright and clear, and, gracious God! what was the spectacle before him? He saw as distinctly as if he had been presented there in the flesh, Ned Moran, himself, stripped naked from the waist upward, as if for pugilistic combat, and drawing towards him in silence. Larkin would have shouted, prayed, cursed, fled across the Park, but he was absolutely powerless; the apparition stopped within a few steps, and leered on him with a ghastly mimicry of the defiant stare with which pugilists strive to cow one another before combat. For a time, which he could not so much as conjecture, he was held in the fascination of that unearthly gaze, and at last the thing, whatever it was, on a sudden swaggered close up to him with extended palms. With an impulse of horror, Larkin put out his hand to keep the figure off, and their palms touched—at least, so he believed—for a thrill of unspeakable agony, running through his arm, pervaded his entire frame, and he fell senseless to the earth.

Though Larkin lived for many years after, his punishment was terrible. He was incurably maimed; and being unable to work, he was forced, for existence, to beg alms of those who had once feared and flattered him. He suffered, too, increasingly, under his own horrible interpretation of the preternatural encounter which was the beginning of all his miseries. It was vain to endeavour to shake his faith in the reality of the apparition, and equally vain, as some compassionately did, to try to persuade him that the greeting with which his vision closed was intended, while inflicting a temporary trial, to signify a compensating reconciliation.

"No, no," he used to say, "all won't do. I know the meaning of it well enough; it is a challenge to meet him in the other world—in Hell, where I am going—that's what it means, and nothing else."

And so, miserable and refusing comfort, he lived on for some years, and then died, and was buried in the same narrow church-yard which contains the remains of his victim.

I need hardly say how absolute was the faith of the honest inhabitants, at the time when I heard the story, in the

reality of the preternatural summons which, through the portals of terror, sickness, and misery, had summoned Bully Larkin to his long, last home, and that, too, upon the very ground on which he had signalised the guiltiest triumph of his violent and vindictive career.

I recollect another story of the preternatural sort, which made no small sensation, some five-and-thirty years ago, among the good gossips of the town; and, with your leave, courteous reader, I shall relate it.

THE SEXTON S ADVENTURE.

Those who remember Chapelizod a quarter of a century ago, or more, may possibly recollect the parish sexton. Bob Martin was held much in awe by truant boys who sauntered into the church-yard on Sundays, to read the tomb-stones, or play leap frog over them, or climb the ivy in search of bats or sparrows' nests, or peep into the mysterious aperture under the eastern window, which opened a dim perspective of descending steps losing themselves among profounder darkness, where lidless coffins gaped horribly among tattered velvet, bones, and dust, which time and mortality had strewn there. Of such horribly curious, and otherwise enterprising juveniles, Bob was, of course, the special scourge and terror. But terrible as was the official aspect of the sexton, and repugnant as his lank form, clothed in rusty, sable vesture, his small, frosty visage, suspicicious, grey eyes, and rusty, brown scratch-wig, might appear to all notions of genial frailty; it was yet true, that Bob Martin's severe morality sometimes nodded, and that Bacchus did not always solicit him in vain.

Bob had a curious mind, a memory well stored with "merry tales," and tales of terror. His profession familiarised him with graves and goblins, and his tastes with weddings, wassail, and sly frolics of all sorts. And as his personal recollections ran back nearly three score years into the perspective of the village history, his fund of local anecdote was copious, accurate, and edifying.

As his ecclesiastical revenues were by no means considerable, he was not unfrequently obliged, for the indulgence of his tastes, to arts which were, at the best, undignified.

He frequently invited himself when his entertainers had forgotten to do so; he dropped in accidentally upon small drinking-parties of his acquaintance in public houses, and entertained them with stories, queer or terrible, from his inexhaustible reservoir, never scrupling to accept an acknowledgment in the shape of hot whiskey-punch, or whatever else was going.

There was at that time a certain atrabilious publican, called Philip Slaney, established in a shop nearly opposite the old turnpike. This man was not, when left to himself, immoderately given to drinking; but being naturally of a saturnine complexion, and his spirits constantly requiring a fillip, he acquired a prodigious liking for Bob Martin's company. The sexton's society, in fact, gradually became the solace of his existence, and he seemed to lose his constitutional melancholy in the fascination of his sly jokes and marvellous stories.

This intimacy did not redound to the prosperity or reputation of the convivial allies. Bob Martin drank a good deal more punch than was good for his health, or consistent with the character of an ecclesiastical functionary. Philip Slaney, too, was drawn into similar indulgences, for it was hard to resist the genial seductions of his gifted companion; and as he was obliged to pay for both, his purse was believed to have suffered even more than his head and liver.

Be this as it may, Bob Martin had the credit of having made a drunkard of "black Phil Slaney"—for by this cognomen was he distinguished; and Phil Slaney had also the reputation of having made the sexton, if possible, a "bigger bliggard" than ever. Under these circumstances, the accounts of the concern opposite the turnpike became somewhat entangled; and it came to pass one drowsy summer morning, the weather being at once sultry and cloudy, that Phil Slaney went into a small back parlour, where he kept his books, and which commanded, though its dirty window-panes, a full view of a dead wall, and having bolted the door, he took a loaded pistol, and clapping the muzzle in his mouth, blew

the upper part of his skull through the ceiling.

This horrid catastrophe shocked Bob Martin extremely; and partly on this account, and partly because having been, on several late occassons, found at night in a state of abstraction, bordering on insensibility, upon the high road, he had been threatened with dismissal; and, as some said, partly also because of the difficulty of finding anybody to "treat" him as poor Phil Slaney used to do, he for a time forswore alcohol in all its combinations, and became an eminent example of temperance and sobriety.

Bob observed his good resolutions, greatly to the comfort of his wife, and the edification of the neighbourhood, with tolerable punctuality. He was seldom tipsy, and never drunk, and was greeted by the better part of society with all the honours of the prodigal son.

Now it happened, about a year after the grisly event we have mentioned, that the curate having received, by the post, due notice of a funeral to be consummated in the churchyard of Chapelizod, with certain instructions respecting the site of the grave, despatched a summons for Bob Martin, with a view to communicate to that functionary these official details.

It was a lowering autumn night: piles of lurid thunder-clouds, slowly rising from the earth, had loaded the sky with a solemn and boding canopy of storm. The growl of the distant thunder was heard afar off upon the dull, still air, and all nature seemed, as it were, hushed and cowering under the oppressive influence of the approaching tempest.

It was past nine o'clock when Bob, putting on his official coat of seedy black, prepared to attend his professional superior.

"Bobby, darlin'," said his wife, before she delivered the hat she held in her hand to his keeping, "sure you won't, Bobby, darlin'—you won't—you know what."

"I *don't* know what," he retorted, smartly, grasping at his hat.

"You won't be throwing up the little finger, Bobby, acushla?" she said, evading his grasp.

"Arrah, why would I, woman? there, give me my hat, will you?"

"But won't you promise me, Bobby darlin'—won't you, alanna?"

"Ay, ay, to be sure I will—why not? —there, give me my hat, and let me go."

"Ay, but you're not promisin', Bobby, mavourneen; you're not promisin' all the time."

"Well, divil carry me if I drink a drop till I come back again," said the sexton, angrily; will that do you? And *now* will you give me my hat?"

"Here it is, darlin'," she said, "and God send you safe back."

And with this parting blessing she closed the door upon his retreating figure, for it was now quite dark, and resumed her knitting till his return, very much relieved; for she thought he had of late been oftener tipsy than was consistent with his thorough reformation, and feared the allurements of the half dozen "publics" which he had at that time to pass on his way to the other end of the town.

They were still open, and exhaled a delicious reek of whiskey, as Bob glided wistfully by them; but he stuck his hands in his pockets and looked the other way, whistling resolutely, and filling his mind with the image of the curate and anticipations of his coming fee. Thus he steered his morality safely through these rocks of offence, and reached the curate's lodging in safety.

He had, however, an unexpected sick call to attend, and was not at home, so that Bob Martin had to sit in the hall and amuse himself with the devil's tattoo until his return. This, unfortunately, was very long delayed, and it must have been fully twelve o'clock when Bob Martin set out upon his homeward way. By this time the storm had gathered to a pitchy darkness, the bellowing thunder was heard among the rocks and hollows of the Dublin mountains, and the pale, blue lightning shone upon the staring fronts of the houses.

By this time, too, every door was closed; but as Bob trudged homeward, his eye mechanically sought the public-house which had once belonged to Phil. Slaney. A faint light was making its way through the shutters and the glass panes over the door-way, which made a sort of dull, foggy halo about the front of the house.

As Bob's eyes had become accustomed to the obscurity by this time, the light in question was quite sufficient to enable him to see a man in

sort of loose riding-coat seated upon a bench which, at that time, was fixed under the window of the house. He wore his hat very much over his eyes, and was smoking a long pipe. The outline of a glass and a quart bottle were also dimly traceable beside him; and a large horse saddled, but faintly discernible, was patiently awaiting his master's leisure.

There was something odd, no doubt, in the appearance of a traveller refreshing himself at such an hour in the open street; but the sexton accounted for it easily by supposing that, on the closing of the house for the night, he had taken what remained of his refection to the place where he was now discussing it *al fresco*.

At another time Bob might have saluted the stranger as he passed with a friendly "good night;" but, somehow, he was out of humour and in no genial mood, and was about passing without any courtesy of the sort, when the stranger, without taking the pipe from his mouth, raised the bottle, and with it beckoned him familiarly, while, with a sort of lurch of the head and shoulders, and at the same time shifting his seat to the end of the bench, he pantomimically invited him to share his seat and his cheer. There was a divine fragrance of whiskey about the spot, and Bob half relented; but he remembered his promise just as he began to waver, and said—

"No, I thank you, sir, I can't stop to-night."

The stranger beckoned with vehement welcome, and pointed to the vacant space on the seat beside him.

"I thank you for your polite offer," said Bob, "but it's what I'm too late as it is, and haven't time to spare, so I wish you a good night."

The traveller jingled the glass against the neck of the bottle, as if to intimate that he might at least swallow a dram without losing time. Bob was mentally quite of the same opinion; but, though his mouth watered, he remembered his promise, and shaking his head with incorruptible resolution, walked on.

The stranger, pipe in mouth, rose from his bench, the bottle in one hand, and the glass in the other, and followed at the Sexton's heels, his dusky horse keeping close in his wake.

There was something suspicious and unaccountable in this importunity.

Bob quickened his pace, but the stranger followed close. The sexton began to feel queer, and turned about. His pursuer was behind, and still inviting him with impatient gestures to taste his liquor.

"I told you before," said Bob, who was both angry and frightened, "that I would not taste it, and that's enough. I don't want to have anything to say to you or your bottle; and in God's name," he added, more vehemently, observing that he was approaching still closer, "fall back and don't be tormenting me this way."

These words, as it seemed, incensed the stranger, for he shook the bottle with violent menace at Bob Martin; but, notwithstanding this gesture of defiance, he suffered the distance between them to increase. Bob, however, beheld him dogging him still in the distance, for his pipe shed a wonderful red glow, which duskily illuminated his entire figure like a lurid atmosphere of meteor.

"I wish the devil had his own, my boy," muttered the excited sexton, "and I know well enough where you'd be."

The next time he looked over his shoulder, to his dismay he observed the importunate stranger as close as ever upon his track.

"Confound you," cried the man of skulls and shovels, almost beside himself with rage and horror, "what is it you want of me?"

The stranger appeared more confident, and kept wagging his head and extending both glass and bottle toward him as he drew near, and Bob Martin heard the horse snorting as it followed in the dark.

"Keep it to yourself, whatever it is, for there is neither grace nor luck about you," cried Bob Martin, freezing with terror; "leave me alone, will you."

And he fumbled in vain among the seething confusion of his ideas for a prayer or an exorcism. He quickened his pace almost to a run; he was now close to his own door, under the impending bank by the river side.

"Let me in, let me in, for God's sake; Molly, open the door," he cried, as he ran to the threshold, and leant his back against the plank. His pursuer confronted him upon the road; the pipe was no longer in his mouth, but the dusky red glow sti

lingered round him. He uttered some inarticulate cavernous sounds, which were wolfish and indescribable, while he seemed employed in pouring out a glass from the bottle.

The sexton kicked with all his force against the door, and cried at the same time with a despairing voice,

"In the name of God Almighty, once for all, leave me alone."

His pursuer furiously flung the contents of the bottle at Bob Martin; but instead of fluid it issued out in a stream of flame, which expanded and whirled round them, and for a moment they were both enveloped in a faint blaze; at the same instant a sudden gust whisked off the stranger's hat, and the sexton beheld that his skull was roofless. For an instant he beheld the gaping aperture, black and shattered, and then he fell senseless into his own doorway, which his affrighted wife had just unbarred.

I need hardly give my reader the key to this most intelligible and authentic narrative. The traveller was acknowledged by all to have been the spectre of the suicide, called up by the Evil One to tempt the convivial sexton into a violation of his promise, sealed, as it was, by an imprecation. Had he succeeded, no doubt the dusky steed, which Bob had seen saddled in attendance, was destined to have carried back a double burden to the place from whence he came.

As an attestation of the reality of this visitation, the old thorn tree which overhung the doorway was found in the morning to have been blasted with the infernal fires which had issued from the bottle, just as if a thunderbolt had scorched it.

The moral of the above tale is upon the surface, apparent, and, so to speak, *self-acting*—a circumstance which happily obviates the necessity of our discussing it together. Taking our leave, therefore, of honest Bob Martin, who now sleeps soundly in the same solemn dormitory where, in his day, he made so many beds for others, I come to a legend of the Royal Irish Artillery, whose head-quarters were for so long a time in the town of Chapelizod. I don't mean to say that I cannot tell a great many more stories, equally authentic and marvellous, touching this old town; but as I may possibly have to perform a like office for other localities, and as Anthony Poplar is known, like Atropos, to carry a shears, wherewith to snip across all "yarns" which exceed reasonable bounds, I consider it, on the whole, safer to despatch the traditions of Chapelizod with one tale more.

Let me, however, first give it aname; for an author can no more despatch a tale without a title, than an apothecary can deliver his physic without a label. We shall, therefore, call it—

THE SPECTRE LOVERS.

THERE lived some fifteen years since in a small and ruinous house, little better than a hovel, an old woman who was reported to have considerably exceeded her eightieth year, and who rejoiced in the name of Alice, or popularly, Ally Moran. Her society was not much courted, for she was neither rich, nor, as the reader may suppose, beautiful. In addition to a lean cur and a cat she had one human companion, her grandson, Peter Brien, whom, with laudable goodnature, she had supported from the period of his orphanage down to that of my story, which finds him in his twentieth year. Peter was a goodnatured slob of a fellow, much more addicted to wrestling, dancing, and love-making, than to hard work, and fonder of whiskey punch than good advice. His grandmother had a high opinion of his accomplishments, which indeed was but natural, and also of his genius, for Peter had of late years begun to apply his mind to politics; and as it was plain that he had a mortal hatred of honest labour, his grandmother predicted, like a true fortune-teller, that he was born to marry an heiress, and Peter himself (who had no mind to forego his freedom even on such terms) that he was destined to find a pot of gold. Upon one point both were agreed, that being unfitted by the peculiar bias of his genius for work, he was to acquire the immense fortune to which his merits entitled him by means of a pure run of good luck. This solution of Peter's future had the double effect of reconciling both himself and his grandmother to his idle courses, and also of main-

taining that even flow of hilarious spirits which made him everywhere welcome, and which was in truth the natural result of his consciousness of approaching affluence.

It happened one night that Peter had enjoyed himself to a very late hour with two or three choice spirits near Palmerstown. They had talked politics and love, sung songs, and told stories, and, above all, had swallowed, in the chastened disguise of punch, at least a pint of good whiskey, every man.

It was considerably past one o'clock when Peter bid his companions good-bye, with a sigh and a hiccough, and lighting his pipe set forth on his solitary homeward way.

The bridge of Chapelizod was pretty nearly the midway point of his night march, and from one cause or another his progress was rather slow, and it was past two o'clock by the time he found himself leaning over its old battlements, and looking up the river, over whose winding current and wooded banks the soft moonlight was falling.

The cold breeze that blew lightly down the stream was grateful to him. It cooled his throbbing head, and he drank it in at his hot lips. The scene, too, had, without his being well sensible of it, a secret fascination. The village was sunk in the profoundest slumber, not a mortal stirring, not a sound afloat, a soft haze covered it all, and the fairy moonlight hovered over the entire landscape.

In a state between rumination and rapture, Peter continued to lean over the battlements of the old bridge, and as he did so he saw, or fancied he saw, emerging one after another along the river bank in the little gardens and enclosures in the rere of the street of Chapelizod, the queerest little white-washed huts and cabins he had ever seen there before. They had not been there that evening when he passed the bridge on the way to his merry tryst. But the most remarkable thing about it was the odd way in which these quaint little cabins showed themselves. First he saw one or two of them just with the corner of his eye, and when he looked full at them, strange to say, they faded away and disappeared. Then another and another came in view, but all in the same coy way, just appearing and gone again before he could well fix his gaze upon them; in a little while, however, they began to bear a fuller gaze, and he found, as it seemed to himself, that he was able by an effort of attention to fix the vision for a longer and a longer time, and when they waxed faint and nearly vanished, he had the power of recalling them into light and substance, until at last their vacillating indistinctness became less and less, and they assumed a permanent place in the moonlit landscape.

"Be the hokey," said Peter, lost in amazement, and dropping his pipe into the river unconsciously, "them is the quarist bits iv mud cabins I ever seen, growing up like musharoons in the dew of an evening, and poppin' up here and down again there, and up again in another place, like so many white rabbits in a warren; and there they stand at last as firm and fast as if they were there from the Deluge; be dad it's enough to make a man a'most believe in the fairies."

This latter was a large concession from Peter, who was a bit of a free-thinker, and spoke contemptuously in his ordinary conversation of that class of agencies.

Having treated himself to a long last stare at these mysterious fabrics, Peter prepared to pursue his homeward way; having crossed the bridge and passed the mill, he arrived at the corner of the main-street of the little town, and casting a careless look up the Dublin road, his eye was arrested by a most unexpected spectacle.

This was no other than a column of foot-soldiers, marching with perfect regularity towards the village, and headed by an officer on horseback. They were at the far side of the turnpike, which was closed; but much to his perplexity he perceived that they marched on through it without appearing to sustain the least check from that barrier.

On they came at a slow march; and what was most singular in the matter was, that they were drawing several cannons along with them; some held ropes, others spoked the wheels, and others again marched in front of the guns and behind them, with muskets shouldered, giving a stately character of parade and regularity to this, as it seemed to Peter, most unmilitary procedure.

It was owing either to some temporary defect in Peter's vision, or to some illusion attendant upon mist and moon-

light, or perhaps to some other cause, that the whole procession had a certain waving and vapoury character which perplexed and tasked his eyes not a little. It was like the pictured pageant of a phantasmagoria reflected upon smoke. It was as if every breath disturbed it; sometimes it was blurred, sometimes obliterated; now here, now there. Sometimes, while the upper part was quite distinct, the legs of the column would nearly fade away or vanish outright, and then again they would come out into clear relief, marching on with measured tread, while the cocked hats and shoulders grew, as it were, transparent, and all but disappeared.

Notwithstanding these strange optical fluctuations, however, the column continued steadily to advance. Peter crossed the street from the corner near the old bridge, running on tip-toe, and with his body stooped to avoid observation, and took up a position upon the raised foot-path in the shadow of the houses, where, as the soldiers kept the middle of the road, he calculated that he might, himself undetected, see them distinctly enough as they passed.

"What the div—, what on airth," he muttered, checking the irreligious ejaculation with which he was about to start, for certain queer misgivings were hovering about his heart, notwithstanding the factitious courage of the whiskey bottle. "What on airth is the manin' of all this? is it the French that's landed at last to give us a hand and help us in airnest to this blessed repale? If it is not them, I simply ask who the div—, I mane who on airth are they, for such sogers as them I never seen before in my born days?"

By this time the foremost of them were quite near, and truth to say they were the queerest soldiers he had ever seen in the course of his life. They wore long gaiters and leather breeches, three-cornered hats, bound with silver lace, long blue coats, with scarlet facings and linings, which latter were shewn by a fastening which held together the two opposite corners of the skirt behind; and in front the breasts were in like manner connected at a single point, where and below which they sloped back, disclosing a long-flaped waistcoat of snowy whiteness; they had very large, long cross-belts, and wore enormous pouches of white leather hung extraordinarily low, and on each of which a little silver star was glittering. But what struck him as most grotesque and outlandish in their costume was their extraordinary display of shirt-frill in front, and of ruffle about their wrists, and the strange manner in which their hair was frizzed out and powdered under their hats, and clubbed up into great rolls behind. But one of the party was mounted. He rode a tall white horse, with high action and arching neck; he had a snow-white feather in his three-cornered hat, and his coat was shimmering all over with a profusion of silver lace. From these circumstances Peter concluded that he must be the commander of the detachment, and examined him as he passed attentively. He was a slight, tall man, whose legs did not half fill his leather breeches, and he appeared to be at the wrong side of sixty. He had a shrunken, weather-beaten, mulberry-coloured face, carried a large black patch over one eye, and turned neither to the right nor to the left, but rode right on at the head of his men, with a grim, military inflexibility.

The countenances of these soldiers, officers as well as men, seemed all full of trouble, and, so to speak, scared and wild. He watched in vain for a single contented or comely face. They had, one and all, a melancholy and hang-dog look; and as they passed by, Peter fancied that the air grew cold and thrilling.

He had seated himself upon a stone bench, from which, staring with all his might, he gazed upon the grotesque and noiseless procession as it filed by him. Noiseless it was; he could neither hear the jingle of accoutrements, the tread of feet, nor the rumble of the wheels; and when the old colonel turned his horse a little, and made as though he were giving the word of command, and a trumpeter, with a swollen blue nose and white feather fringe round his hat, who was walking beside him, turned about and put his bugle to his lips, still Peter heard nothing, although it was plain the sound had reached the soldiers, for they instantly changed their front to three abreast.

"Botheration!" muttered Peter, "is it deaf I'm growing?"

But that could not be, for he heard the sighing of the breeze and the

rush of the neighbouring Liffey plain enough.

"Well," said he, in the same cautious key, "by the piper, this bangs Banagher fairly! It 's either the Frinch army that 's in it, come to take the town iv Chapelizod by surprise, an' makin' no noise for feard iv wakenin' the inhabitants; or else it 's—it 's—what it 's—somethin' else. But, tundher-an-ouns, what 's gone wid Fitzpatrick's shop across the way?"

The brown, dingy stone building at the opposite side of the street looked newer and cleaner than he had been used to see it; the front door of it stood open, and a sentry, in the same grotesque uniform, with shouldered musket, was pacing noiselessly to and fro before it. At the angle of this building, in like manner, a wide gate (of which Peter had no recollection whatever) stood open, before which, also, a similar sentry was gliding, and into this gateway the whole column gradually passed, and Peter finally lost sight of it.

"I'm not asleep; I'm not dhramin'," said he, rubbing his eyes, and stamping slightly on the pavement, to assure himself that he was wide awake. "It is a quare business, whatever it is; an' it's not alone that, but everything about the town looks strange to me. There's Tresham's house new painted, bedad, an' them flowers in the windies! An' Delany's house, too, that had not a whole pane of glass in it this morning, and scarce a slate on the roof of it! It is not possible it 's what it 's dhrunk I am. Sure there 's the big tree, and not a leaf of it changed since I passed, and the stars overhead, all right. I don't think it is in my eyes it is."

And so looking about him, and every moment finding or fancying new food for wonder, he walked along the pavement, intending, without further delay, to make his way home.

But his adventures for the night were not concluded. He had nearly reached the angle of the short lane that leads up to the church, when for the first time he perceived that an officer, in the uniform he had just seen, was walking before, only a few yards in advance of him.

The officer was walking along at an easy, swinging gait, and carried his sword under his arm, and was looking down on the pavement with an air of reverie.

In the very fact that he seemed unconscious of Peter's presence, and disposed to keep his reflections to himself, there was something reassuring. Besides, the reader must please to remember that our hero had a *quantum sufficit* of good punch before his adventure commenced, and was thus fortified against those qualms and terrors under which, in a more reasonable state of mind, he might not impossibly have sunk.

The idea of the French invasion revived in full power in Peter's fuddled imagination, as he pursued the nonchalant swagger of the officer.

"Be the powers iv Moll Kelly, I'll ax him what it is," said Peter, with a sudden accession of rashness. "He may tell me or not, as he plases, but he can't be offinded, anyhow."

With this reflection having inspired himself, Peter cleared his voice and began—

"Captain!" said he, "I ax your pardon, captain, an' maybe you'd be so condescindin' to my ignorance as to tell me, if it's plasin' to yer honour, whether your honour is not a Frinchman, if it's plasin' to you."

This he asked, not thinking that, had it been as he suspected, not one word of his question in all probability would have been intelligible to the person he addressed. He was, however, understood, for the officer answered him in English, at the same time slackening his pace and moving a little to the side of the pathway, as if to invite his interrogator to take his place beside him.

"No; I am an Irishman," he answered.

"I humbly thank your honour," said Peter, drawing nearer—for the affability and the nativity of the officer encouraged him—"but maybe your honour is in the *sarvice* of the King of France?"

"I serve the same King as you do," he answered, with a sorrowful significance which Peter did not comprehend at the time; and, interrogating in turn, he asked, "But what calls you forth at this hour of the day?"

"The *day*, your honour!—the night, you mane."

"It was always our way to turn night into day, and we keep to it still," remarked the soldier. "But, no matter, come up here to my house; I have

a job for you, if you wish to earn some money easily. I live here."

As he said this, he beckoned authoritatively to Peter, who followed almost mechanically at his heels, and they turned up a little lane near the old Roman Catholic chapel, at the end of which stood, in Peter's time, the ruins of a tall, stone-built house.

Like everything else in the town, it had suffered a metamorphosis. The stained and ragged walls were now erect, perfect, and covered with pebble-dash; window-panes glittered coldly in every window; the green hall-door had a bright brass knocker on it. Peter did not know whether to believe his previous or his present impressions; seeing is believing, and Peter could not dispute the reality of the scene. All the records of his memory seemed but the images of a tipsy dream. In a trance of astonishment and perplexity, therefore, he submitted himself to the chances of his adventure.

The door opened, the officer beckoned with a melancholy air of authority to Peter, and entered. Our hero followed him into a sort of hall, which was very dark, but he was guided by the steps of the soldier, and, in silence, they ascended the stairs. The moonlight, which shone in at the lobbies, showed an old, dark wainscotting, and a heavy, oak bannister. They passed by closed doors at different landing-places, but all was dark and silent as, indeed, became that late hour of the night.

Now they ascended to the topmost floor. The captain paused for a minute at the nearest door, and, with a heavy groan, pushing it open, entered the room. Peter remained at the threshold. A slight female form in a sort of loose, white robe, and with a great deal of dark hair hanging loosely about her, was standing in the middle of the floor, with her back towards them.

The soldier stopped short before he reached her, and said, in a voice of great anguish, "Still the same, sweet bird—sweet bird! still the same." Whereupon, she turned suddenly, and threw her arms about the neck of the officer, with a gesture of fondness and despair, and her frame was agitated as if by a burst of sobs. He held her close to his breast in silence; and honest Peter felt a strange terror creep over him, as he witnessed these mysterious sorrows and endearments.

"To-night, to-night—and then ten years more—ten long years—another ten years."

The officer and the lady seemed to speak these words together; her voice mingled with his in a musical and fearful wail, like a distant summer wind, in the dead hour of night, wandering through ruins. Then he heard the officer say, alone, in a voice of anguish—

"Upon me be it all, for ever, sweet birdie, upon me."

And again they seemed to mourn together in the same soft and desolate wail, like sounds of grief heard from a great distance.

Peter was thrilled with horror, but he was also under a strange fascination; and an intense and dreadful curiosity held him fast.

The moon was shining obliquely into the room, and through the window Peter saw the familiar slopes of the Park, sleeping mistily under its shimmer. He could also see the furniture of the room with tolerable distinctness—the old balloon-backed chairs, a four-post bed in a sort of recess, and a rack against the wall, from which hung some military clothes and accoutrements; and the sight of all these homely objects reassured him somewhat, and he could not help feeling unspeakably curious to see the face of the girl whose long hair was streaming over the officer's epaulet.

Peter, accordingly, coughed, at first slightly, and afterward more loudly, to recal her from her reverie of grief; and, apparently, he succeeded; for she turned round, as did her companion, and both, standing hand in hand, looked upon him fixedly. He thought he had never seen such large, strange eyes in all his life; and their gaze seemed to chill the very air around him, and arrest the pulses of his heart. An eternity of misery and remorse was in the shadowy faces that looked upon him.

If Peter had taken less whiskey by a single thimbleful, it is probable that he would have lost heart altogether before these figures, which seemed every moment to assume a more marked and fearful, though hardly definable, contrast to ordinary human shapes.

"What is it you want with me?" he stammered.

"To bring my lost treasure to the churchyard," replied the lady, in a sil-

very voice of more than mortal desolation.

The word "treasure" revived the resolution of Peter, although a cold sweat was covering him, and his hair was bristling with horror; he believed, however, that he was on the brink of fortune, if he could but command nerve to brave the interview to its close.

"And where," he gasped, "is it hid—where will I find it?"

They both pointed to the sill of the window, through which the moon was shining at the far end of the room, and the soldier said—

"Under that stone."

Peter drew a long breath, and wiped the cold dew from his face, preparatory to passing to the window, where he expected to secure the reward of his protracted terrors. But looking steadfastly at the window, he saw the faint image of a new-born child sitting upon the sill in the moonlight, with its little arms stretched toward him, and a smile so heavenly as he never beheld before.

At sight of this, strange to say, his heart entirely failed him, he looked on the figures that stood near, and beheld them gazing on the infantine form with a smile so guilty and distorted, that he felt as if he were entering alive among the scenery of hell, and shuddering, he cried in an irrepressible agony of horror—

"I'll have nothing to say with you, and nothing to do with you; I don't know what yez are or what yez want iv me, but let me go this minute, every one of yez, in the name of God."

With these words there came a strange rumbling and sighing about Peter's ears; he lost sight of everything, and felt that peculiar and not unpleasant sensation of falling softly, that sometimes supervenes in sleep, ending in a dull shock. After that he had neither dream nor consciousness till he wakened, chill and stiff, stretched between two piles of old rubbish, among the black and roofless walls of the ruined house.

We need hardly mention that the village had put on its wonted air of neglect and decay, or that Peter looked around him in vain for traces of those novelties which had so puzzled and distracted him upon the previous night.

"Ay, ay," said his old mother, removing her pipe, as he ended his description of the view from the bridge, "sure enough I remember myself, when I was a slip of a girl, these little white cabins among the gardens by the river side. The artillery sogers that was married, or had not room in the barracks, used to be in them, but they're all gone long ago."

"The Lord be marciful to us!" she resumed, when he had described the military procession, "it's often I seen the regiment marchin' into the town, jist as you saw it last night, acushla. Oh, voch, but it makes my heart sore to think iv them days; they were pleasant times, sure enough; but is not it terrible, avick, to think its what it was the ghost of the rigiment you seen? The Lord betune us an' harm, for it was nothing else, as sure as I'm sittin' here."

When he mentioned the peculiar physiognomy and figure of the old officer who rode at the head of the regiment—

"*That*," said the old crone, dogmatically, "was ould Colonel Grimshaw, the Lord presarve us! he's buried in the churchyard iv Chapelizod, and well I remember him, when I was a young thing, an' a cross ould floggin' fellow he was wid the men, an' a devil's boy among the girls—rest his soul!"

"Amen!" said Peter; "it's often I read his tomb-stone myself; but he's a long time dead."

"Sure, I tell you he died when I was no more nor a slip iv a girl—the Lord betune us and harm!"

"I'm afeard it is what I'm not long for this world myself, afther seeing such a sight as that," said Peter, fearfully.

"Nonsinse, avourneen," retorted his grandmother, indignantly, though she had herself misgivings on the subject; "sure there was Phil Doolan, the ferryman, that seen black Ann Scanlan in his own boat, and what harm ever kem of it?"

Peter proceeded with his narrative, but when he came to the description of the house, in which his adventure had had so sinister a conclusion, the old woman was at fault.

"I know the house and the ould walls well, an' I can remember the time there was a roof on it, and the doors an' windows in it, but it had a bad name about being haunted, but by who, or for what, I forget intirely."

"Did you ever hear was there goold or silver there?" he inquired.

"No, no, avick, don't be thinking

about the likes; take a fool's advice, and never go next or near them ugly black walls again the longest day you have to live; an' I'd take my davy, it's what it's the same word the priest himself I'd be afther sayin' to you if you wor to ax his raverence consarnin' it, for it's plain to be seen it was nothing good you seen there, and there's neither luck nor grace about it."

Peter's adventure made no little noise in the neighbourhood, as the reader may well suppose; and a few evenings after it, being on an errand to old Major Vandeleur, who lived in a snug old-fashioned house, close by the river, under a perfect bower of ancient trees, he was called on to relate the story in the parlour.

The Major was, as I have said, an old man; he was small, lean, and upright, with a mahogany complexion, and a wooden inflexibility of face; he was a man, besides, of few words, and if *he* was old, it follows plainly that his mother was older still. Nobody could guess or tell *how* old, but it was admitted that her own generation had long passed away, and that she had not a competitor left. She had French blood in her veins, and although she did not retain her charms quite so well as Ninon de l'Enclos, she was in full possession of all her mental activity, and talked quite enough for herself and the Major.

"So, Peter," she said, "you have seen the dear, old Royal Irish again in the streets of Chapelizod. Make him a tumbler of punch, Frank; and Peter, sit down, and while you take it let us have the story."

Peter accordingly, seated near the door, with a tumbler of the nectarian stimulant steaming beside him, proceeded with marvellous courage, considering they had no light but the uncertain glare of the fire, to relate with minute particularity his awful adventure. The old lady listened at first with a smile of goodnatured incredulity; her cross-examination touching the drinking-bout at Palmerstown had been teazing, but as the narrative proceeded she became attentive, and at length absorbed, and once or twice she uttered ejaculations of pity or awe. When it was over, the old lady looked with a somewhat sad and stern abstraction on the table, patting her cat assiduously meanwhile, and then suddenly looking upon her son, the Major, she said—

"Frank, as sure as I live he has seen the wicked Captain Devereux."

The Major uttered an inarticulate expression of wonder.

"The house was precisely that he has described. I have told you the story often, as I heard it from your dear grandmother, about the poor young lady he ruined, and the dreadful suspicion about the little baby. *She*, poor thing, died in that house heart-broken, and you know he was shot shortly after in a duel."

This was the only light that Peter ever received respecting his adventure. It was supposed, however, that he still clung to the hope that treasure of some sort was hidden about the old house, for he was often seen lurking about its walls, and at last his fate overtook him, poor fellow, in the pursuit; for climbing near the summit one day, his holding gave way, and he fell upon the hard uneven ground, fracturing a leg and a rib, and after a short interval died, and he, like the other heroes of these true tales, lies buried in the little churchyard of Chapelizod.

TOBIAS GUARNERIUS—A PSYCHOLOGICAL TALE.

Some fifty years ago, my great grandfather journeyed to Bremen, where, for several days, he was detained on business. One dark winter's evening, as he was strolling about, near the Cathedral, he remarked, at the angle of a lonely street, a little shop, in the front of which hung two boards, red painted, and purporting to represent violins, thereby indicating the business carried on within, or rather intended to be carried on; for the whole stock was composed but of a trombone, suspended at the wall, a violoncello, bereft of strings, some three or four bows, and a tenor violin, which the master of the establishment was busy mending. With these exceptions, the place was perfectly empty, and, despite of the showboard affixed over the door, resembled a burgher guard-house rather than the shop of a musical-instrument maker.

The agonising wick of a half-burned candle projected its gloomy tints over the man working in this wretched abode. Little did he appear to care about perfecting the work in which he was engaged, for now and then he would lay aside the instrument, leave his chair, and stride up and down, his glance fixed, his movements abrupt and hurried, as a man haunted by some deep and torturing thought.

Partly through curiosity, and partly to shelter from a sudden snow-shower, my adventurous kinsman entered the shop, and, despite his being totally unacquainted with music, requested to be shown some violins.

"Violins!" brusquely responded the man. "Don't you see that I have none? I don't sell violins, unless you wish to take a bargain of this violoncello; it was given me as payment for mending the instruments belonging to the orchestra of the 'Learned Dogs.' Yes, sir," reiterated he, as my grandfather expressed a sneering incredulity, "and very successful concerts they were, too, for the members of the Great Council unanimously expressed their satisfaction. Come, buy my violoncello; I'll let you have it for ten crowns; here, lay down twenty florins and it is yours."

My relative objected that he could not possibly purchase a violoncello, as he actually stood in need of a violin.

To this conclusive argument, the intrument-maker replied in so strange a manner, that his interlocutor at once suspected him to be something of a maniac, and his doubts were soon removed when he saw him walk about and make extraordinary gestures; moreover, at this moment an old dame came in, shrugging her shoulders, and beckoned that the poor fellow was not right in his mind.

The next day my grandfather left the town, without otherwise thinking of the strange being with whom he had come in contact. Three years afterwards, having returned to Bremen, he observed that the shop was closed, and on the dilapidated shutters remarked large red crosses, a circumstance which naturally awoke his attention. At supper-time he communicated his observations to his host, and told him of the strange reception he had met with, in that very shop, three years previous. The magistrate (for my grandfather's host was no less than the chief police magistrate) was an amiable man and a witty narrator; he made no difficulty in satisfying him on the subject, and at once recounted the following authentic story:—

"Tobias Guarnerius was the name of that instrument-maker. Barely could he, by his exertions, support his aged mother, whom you saw in his house, where she had been living since the death of her son's wife.

"He was the only workman of his profession in the town, and being of acknowledged practical ability, numerous musical artists and amateurs sent him instruments to repair. Through this, he might easily have led a comfortable and happy life; but, ten years before you chanced to meet him, he had been been visited by a real calamity. One fine morning he awoke a prey to a fixed idea, the realisation of which he unremittingly pursued, at the sacrifice of money, time, and health.

"Vainly had his wife represented to him the madness of his perversity, and vainly besought him not to reduce her to a state of misery; the poor woman

died, in a great measure from the grief she had experienced in seeing him squander the fruits of his labours. Still this dire occurrence stayed not the fever that possessed him. All he had, had been ingulfed into the abyss open before him—at first his savings, afterwards the money he could borrow from his friends; at a later period, his furniture, his goods, and lastly a portion of his clothes. However, his unsuccessful attempts deterred him not from the insane project he contemplated. At one time he had been compelled, from want of money, to cease his experiments, but, nevertheless, still cherished the hope of obtaining a result such as should, at some not distant period, render him celebrated, and amply compensate him for his labour and sacrifices.

"It is but right to say, that, had he attained his end, it would have been to him a source of fortune. Having had in his possession a violin of Stradivarius, for which amateurs had offered him an immense price, he imagined he could imitate the make of that celebrated artificer. Therefore he set to work. By using the same sort of wood as that which Stradivarius employed, and copying with mathematical precision the shape and dimensions of that model instrument, he expected to obtain from his own violins sounds equally powerful and harmonious. Still, despite all efforts, there ever was some slight difference; every unsuccessful attempt was instantly followed by another, as each time he detected some imperfection to which could be ascribed the inferiority of his work; so the task was ever to be recommenced. This was a sort of vicious circle, wherein the poor man indefinitely turned—an apprenticeship which might have lasted a life-time.

"However, after numerous essays, he had modified his primitive idea. One day he succeeded admirably, making a violin of irreproachable imitation; still the instrument, fashioned by his hands, proved, in the end, so much inferior to the Stradivarius, that he arrived at the conclusion, that, in the creation of this *chef d'œuvre*, there lay some element of a preternatural kind, which he had hitherto neglected to call into action.

"'Who knows,' he gravely said, one day, to a natural philosopher, who, by a novel application of the theory of sound, pretended to lead him to the solution of his instrumental problem; 'who knows but it is rather beyond the material world I should seek? words represent ideas, do they not? Now, the French instrument-makers call the sound-post 'the soul of a violin.' The soul! Do you understand me, sir? Perhaps, unwittingly, have I found, at last, the secret I have so long sought for.'

"A half smile was the philosopher's sole response; and poor Tobias again lost himself more deeply than ever in the labyrinth of his researches.

"It chanced, one evening, that a customer brought a bow to be mended, and forgot in the shop a book which, for several days, remained in Guarnerius' possession. During his leisure hours (scarce were they, for when his hands worked not, his poor brain was busily engaged), Tobias scanned this book—one of those venerable monuments of German patience and erudition, in the introduction of which the author asserted, with unaffected modesty, that he would discourse *de omni re scibili!* and a few other subjects. Indeed, you could see next to a chapter on 'The best form of government,' this title—'The art of taming a shrew.' Another contained 'A receipt for making Cyprus wine;' 'A dissertation on the morals of the eleven thousand virgins;' and, lastly, 'An exaltation of the benefits of baldness.' A tone of peculiar *bonhomie* pervaded this shapeless work, and coaxed on the reader most pleasingly; so much did it attract our monomaniac that, during half a day, it diverted him from his haunting thoughts.

"Unexpectedly, at the reverse of a page, this heading caught his searching eyes:—'On the transfusion of souls!' Scarcely had he read these words when as though the revelation of his long-sought-for secret were about taking place, he called out to his mother to close the shop, and having desired her to tell all visitors that he was absent from town, he madly rushed out and shut himself up in his chamber. He began to read that chapter which, in his mind's-eye, could not fail to be the most marvellous ever penned by philosopher.

"No human disappointment could be compared to that which awaited poor Tobias. But a second previously, he would willingly have given a pound of

his own flesh to be allowed to read those pages which were, in fact, but a wretched rhapsody, interspersed with quotations from the Scriptures, Aristotle, Plato, and the fathers of the Church. After a long series of ramblings, of abstractions, and conversations, the author concluded by this novel discovery—the soul is immortal! But, alas! for poor Tobias; his hour was at hand; his imagination had greedily seized upon the words suddenly offered to his diseased mind, that title which lent a sense of reason to his many visions; in a word, he now pictured to himself the soul as a transferable substance, which, from its power of animation, was susceptible of translation.

"Nor is it much to be wondered at, that in Germany (where philosophy is, so to speak, inhaled from the very air), our artisan, who had heard of metempsychosis, should have been gradually beguiled into that extravagant belief. From his hours of pondering over that chapter, he imbibed an indelible faith. Henceforth, his only thought was, what material process could enable him to apply to the making of his instruments the benefit of his psychological discovery.

"Three months later, on St. Joseph's eve, every clock had long since struck one, and the whole city of Bremen was buried in sleep. Tobias' working shop was carefully closed, and, lest any one might detect, through the shutters, the light glimmering in his back room, a curtain of double-folded green baize had been spread before the half-glass door.

"In truth, these preliminary precautions were not uncalled for, as our violin maker was now engaged in the most strange and unnatural occupation. In a red damask curtained bed, whereon, forty years back, Tobias had been ushered into the world, lay his aged mother, Brigitta Guarnerius, a prey to the pangs of agony—now succumbing a victim to consumption, after many months of lingering illness. There he stood, leaning over her chest, from which was heard issuing a frightful rattle. Not a tear bedewed his eye, nor did his features express the slightest sympathy for the awful sufferings of his dying parent. He seemed absorbed in the presentiment of some solemn and fatal occurrence, the expectation of which engrossed his whole being. Doubtless, for the purpose of receiving some strange preparation, an extraordinary apparatus, never before heard of, nor described by human science, had been so placed as to establish a connexion between the couch of the old dame and a table whereon lay an unfinished violin; a tube, visibly made from an alloy of different metals, and one end of which was funnel-shaped, covered the lips of the woman, and received her breath, which regularly ingulfed itself with a mournful noise. The other extremity of this tube was adapted to a post, similar to those placed upwards between the bottom and sound-board of stringed instruments, with this difference, that it was of an unusually great diameter, hollow, and so disposed as to shut hermetically, by means of an admirably cut out screwing lid, when the mouth-piece of the tube should be removed. Precisely above the point of juncture between the wood and metal, and as though to prevent any evaporation when the separation should take place, a sort of deal box was contrived, the damp and worm-eaten boards of which exhaled a nauseous, earthy odour, which, as also the rusty nails still remaining, indicated their having formed part of an object of larger dimensions.

"At fifty-two minutes past one the breathing of the patient ceased, and her heart and pulse beat no more. A deep sigh was suddenly heard from within the tube, agitated, as it were, by a galvanic motion; and that sigh was succeeded by a shudder, which ran along the metal, and rebounded in the bottom of the case connected with it. Instantly Tobias rushed forward; his eyes wild, his breast heaving; he pushed aside the tube conductor; and, notwithstanding the incredible resistance which impeded his purpose, quickly screwed the lid on the end of the post.

"Now, although the material proof of this monstrosity was never produced, it is generally believed that Tobias Guarnerius had confined within the unfinished instrument, the soul of his poor mother—the first soul he had chanced to meet wherewith to make his experiment. No sooner had the link been severed, by which the spirit was united to the body, now at the end of its earthly labour, than the soul sprang to return upwards; being compelled to follow the narrow passage which was to impede its exit, it had, in its dis-

tress, fled to the very limit of the space free before it; doubtless, it might have escaped in spite of the short time the gaoler had been closing the lid. But all had been foreseen by his hellish imagination. The fir planks, covering the space over which the odious mystery was accomplished, had belonged to a coffin but recently taken from the churchyard. When striving to depart, the soul, horror-stricken by that atmosphere of death, had shrunk backwards. Then had Tobias imprisoned it to make it serve hereafter for the accomplishment of his monstrous purposes. However, such a frightful experiment could not take place without an awful punishment visiting its author. Scarcely was the deed consummated, when Tobias, stricken, as by an electric shock, fell on the floor, where he lay senseless long after sunrise.

"When awaking from his lethargy, he felt at first an utter prostration; his limbs being fatigue-worn as after a long journey; but it was no easy thing for him to collect his thoughts, and understand that which had happened him. At last he gathered sufficient remembrance of all that had passed during the night. His hand agitated by a shuddering which he ever retained, he approached the bed whereon rested the cold and lifeless body. He closed the eyelids lest a deadly glance should meet his; and, having covered the face, he experienced a tremulous sensation; for he imagined the angular shape, delineated beneath the sheet, assumed an air of reproachful defiance.

"A fortnight had elapsed; the remains of Brigitta had been laid in the grave; but the day of her funeral witnessed extraordinary occurrences: each time when, during the prayers for the dead, the priest had spoken of the soul of the deceased, the tapers, lighted round the coffin, were suddenly extinguished; and many other strange reports were heard afterwards. Tobias had seen and heard all; remorse soon gnawed him to his very heart, so strongly, indeed, that albeit he had realised the dream of his entire life, he had not yet dared to try the instrument which was now completed. However, in it dwelt a wonderful harmony, for whenever the wind merely passed over the strings, the violin exhaled sighs of an incredible sweetness.

"It having become known that Tobias had discovered his long sought for secret, musicians and amateurs daily crowded into his shop, some laughing at the dreamer, others asking, with earnest curiosity, when the violin-wonder should be heard; but Tobias ever delayed, asserting that as yet he was not ready.

"It so occurred, that a certain German prince chanced to pass through Bremen, who, above all accomplishments, possessed that of being a perfect violinist. His reputation as a *virtuoso* had spread throughout Europe, and whatsoever the importance of the town he visited, a concert was instantly organised; and oftentimes would his highness deign to number amongst the instrumentalists. The Burgomaster, wishing to gratify the illustrious performer, hastened to prepare a musical *soirée*, and informed Guarnerius that he would be pleased to have him make the first essay of his new instrument.

"At the moment Tobias received this intimation, he was becoming reconciled to his own conscience. The impression of terror he had received from the contemplation of his awful deed, like the memory of all human emotions, had gradually died away. In his then quietude, he found the following strange arguments that sprung to his relief:—

"'We never know the decrees of Divine justice, nor can we tell who shall be lost, or who shall be saved. In the world's judgment, my mother led a good life—true; but will heaven confirm this judgment? And who can deny, but by detaining her soul here below, I perhaps spare her days of awful torments! Moreover, I am a good son (he added, with sublime sophistry. Others reverentially preserve the bones of their parents. I preserve the *soul* of my mother, nor will I part with it on any account. Between these examples of filial piety, is there not truly that same difference which separates the spiritual from the material.'

"Such were the reflections with which Tobias quieted his conscience.

"On the evening of the great experiment a new anxiety suddenly seized upon his mind: he began to question the satisfactory result he had so long anticipated. Had the soul been really transfused? Supposing it had for some

seconds sojourned where it had been imprisoned, might it not possibly have escaped by some subtle evaporation, thereby obeying the celestial law of attraction, recalling it heavenward? And what should not be his confusion, if, in presence of the whole assembled city, his superhuman creation proved to be, after all, but a wretched squeaking instrument, similar to the many he had made before. In truth his fears were rational, and rather than expose himself to so dreadful a disappointment, he would have conquered that religious terror which had hitherto prevented him from putting his work to the test; now would he have tried his violin had it still been in his possession! But acting as a man who knows the world, in the morning he had sent to the Burgomaster's residence the violin, placed in a costly case, of which he kept the key; *alea jacta est;* he could not change his resolution; in another half hour he would surpass the glory of Stradivarius and other masters in his art, or become an object of merciless derision.

"At the appointed time, all the guests of the grand festival being present, Tobias Guarnerius was ushered into the drawing-rooms. The general appearance of his dress was somewhat antediluvian, and told of a long suffered misery. Despite the particular pains he had taken, there was in his outward man something stiff and gaudy, which made of him a burlesque-looking individual. However, once seated in a corner, his face pale as marble, his motionless eye staring with dire anxiety at the *virtuoso,* who, for the first time, was about giving a voice to his creation, he no longer appeared grotesque; but sentiments of fearful emotion, akin to his own, pervaded the entire auditory.

"It were vain to attempt describing the agitation which passed through the assembly when the bow began to set the strings in vibration; the captive soul was then tortured by frightful agony, and lamented in dismal accents. Some people have even asserted, that from the first notes they felt as though they had been uplifted from the ground and had remained suspended in the air, amidst indescribable anguish; to others the perception of the sound was so deep and impressive, so profound and powerful were their sensations, that they felt as though their skin had been torn off and their nerves left bare.

"But that which no human words could depict, was the ineffable sympathy of all the souls, recognising, although unable to account for the prestige, the voice of a sister calling to them, whose plaintive accents made them sink into profound melancholy, and finally into tears. Neither the grief of a mother weeping over her dead first-born, the tearful lament of a maiden on the day of her lover's desertion, nor the sorrowing accents of an artist, dying ere his genius' creation be achieved, can give an adequate idea of the bitter complaint of this daughter of Heaven, treacherously detained beyond its earthly time, and beseeching to be freed into eternal repose. No one, not even he who led the bow on the strings, could have remembered one single note of the tune played on Guarnerius's violin; no one could have told whether that which he had heard were a melodious song, or the wonderful tale of a sublime poet, whose admirable art would have depicted all human suffering, anxieties, and sadness in life; it spoke of all, from vague, regretful melancholy, with its endless desires, to deceptions the most heart-rending; but none could tell that at any time, or in any place, a harmony so deeply moving had struck upon his ear.

"When the music had ceased, the auditors recovering from the ecstasy and inward contemplation in which they had been plunged, turned their looks towards Tobias Guarnerius. At this moment, the artist so entirely prevailed over the man, that he had been deaf to the cry of anguish, echoing in every one's heart, which so profoundly ought to have moved him. Indeed, to this soul-gaoler, not only ought it to have been a lament, but also an awful reproach; yet he had heard nought but sounds of a heavenly harmony, superior to all that the masters in his art had ever produced; at last finding it solved, that problem of his entire life, he dropped on his knees, his clasped hands extended heavenwards, and tears ran down his face, now beaming with an expression of indescribable ecstasy. Only after a lapse of fifteen minutes did he recognise the Prince, who having roused him from his blissful *aparte,* by violently shaking him by

the arm, inquired whether he would take a thousand crowns for his violin.

"'My violin for a thousand crowns!' responded he, with a wild glance and his wonted maniac-like laughter, 'so you presume to set a price upon that which yesterday existed not, and does exist now? Would you like to buy the sun? *Mein Herr*, what would you pay for it, suppose, some fine morning, it were put on sale?'

"What meant these haughty words of the poor instrument-maker? Was his filial piety growing indignant at the bargain offered, or his vanity as an inventor revolting against this mean appreciation of his work? It was in the latter sense that the Prince interpreted the objections of Tobias, so he immediately doubled his offer; but the man insisted that he was not willing to sell his violin, his glory being now immortal. Unfortunately he had to contend with a royal wish, and one not easily deterred by obstacles; the Prince having drawn from his pocket a bundle of bank notes, amounting to 1,200 florins, scattered them on the table, with the contents of a superb purse, plentifully supplied with gold.

"'For this—your violin?' exclaimed the noble *dillettante*.

On beholding this, poor Tobias, who had never in his life possessed as much as a thousand florins, sacrificed pride, filial piety, and every other sentiment; in a word, all his scruples suddenly vanished, as with a covetous eye he counted the notes, and valued rapidly the contents of the purse. Then affecting to yield reluctantly to an unsupportable constraint, he said:—

"'Since you insist so positively, I consent. Take my violin and even the case into the bargain. But please bear in mind, that I do not warrant my instrument; if you take bad care of it, and it should get out of order, remember I will not undertake to mend it.'

His highness's desire was such, that it did not allow him to consider one moment that there was any such chance to dread. Having ordered the violin to be carried to the Burgomaster's house, the Prince virtuoso abruptly took leave of the company, to go and quietly indulge in the playing of his instrument, to the great displeasure of the neighbouring inhabitants, whose repose was completely out of the question during his first night of violin enjoyment; nor had Tobias very peaceful rest; his mind being haunted by the same thoughts which had seized upon him at the Burgomaster's; 'his glory would be everlasting!—and now he was rich, immensely rich, a fortune of more than fifteen thousand florins!'

"To make himself the better conscious of this pleasing reality, he counted, one by one, every gold piece, every bank note; and when, his lamp being extinguished, his eye could no longer feast upon the sight, he still counted and caressed the notes and gold, and enclosed the whole in his purse, that he might weigh and hold his whole fortune in his hand; thus did he remain occupied until the rise of morning, when at length he fell asleep. He rested but a short time, and when he awoke, felt as though he had spent the previous evening amidst the joyous ravings of intoxication; he felt his head heavy, his thoughts uncollected, and his heart unsatisfied. An awful idea began to besiege him: not only had he stolen and detained, but lo! he had sold the soul of his mother; he now imagined that, at every hour, the purchaser would have the right of awaking and forcing it to sing. Perhaps he would sell it to some other person; whither then might it not journey? While tortured by these reflections, a man who belonged to the Burgomaster's household entered his shop; Tobias knew well this visitor, who, many years back, had been affianced to Brigitta, and on the eve of marrying her, when suddenly he was compelled to become a soldier. Many years afterwards he had returned and found her another man's wife; still he continued to entertain great friendship for her; and her husband, having entire confidence in her, far from experiencing any jealousy, had repeatedly invited him to visit whenever he chose; thus he had become almost an inmate of the house, and had many a time nursed little Tobias.

On the previous evening, from the antechamber, he had heard the violin within which Brigitta's soul sighed; instantly he had recognised her voice, for, however old a man may be, never are his lover's recollections utterly banished from memory. It was in the like heart-rending accents that Brigitta had lamented, that day which he could not forget, when they parted! During the night he remained sleepless, and

fancying he heard the voice of his mistress, he fell into the most torturing perplexities; wherefore, early in the morning he went to demand of Tobias an explanation respecting that supernatural event. The old man had not uttered three words when Tobias felt confused, and faltered in an embarassed manner; however, he soon became more composed, and essayed to talk merrily on the subject, but Brigitta's old lover was not to be deceived by this; he retired still more perplexed, shaking his head, and muttering between his teeth:—

"'There must be some wicked mystery in all this!'

"Already did Tobias suffer bitterly for his crime, when he thought it Heaven's secret only, but, how dreadful his pangs, when he knew that a mortal's attention was directed on the trace of his wicked deed! Now he began to tremble lest it might be referred to human justice; for several hours more he struggled against fear and remorse; at last overpowered by both, he repaired to the purchaser's for the purpose of entreating him to retake his gold, the price of his infamous bargain, and restore the violin. Tobias' intention was to break the spell and free the captive spirit, as soon as the instrument should be in his possession. But men do not ever command the means of retracing their steps in the path of evil, whereon they so easily enter. The Prince had left Bremen before daylight, and was already fifty miles off, so Tobias' first attempt proved fruitless. However, determined as he was no longer to bear willingly the weight of his fault, the guilty son did not hesitate; having hastily closed his shop, he walked to the outskirts of the town, where he could meet the public coach that should conduct him near the Prince's chateau. But when he arrived he could not gain access to his Highness, nor was he more fortunate for the two successive days, and at last being admitted to the princely presence, he heard that the violin had already changed hands. The royal dilettante had not been able to play on this instrument more than two days, so very irritable had it rendered his nervous system; his doctor having declared that the piercing, preternatural sounds produced by the violin were the cause of this derangement in the virtuoso's health. The Prince had sold it to an Italian, about making his tour of Europe, and who had left instantly for Paris, where he intended giving concerts.

"Tobias set off at once; he entered the French capital, unmindful of the many curiosities, which at another period he would have gazed upon so greedily; his thoughts were centered upon one sole object, that of knowing the address of Signor Ballondini. He was apprised of it without any difficulty, for, thanks to his violin, the artist had, from his first concert, gained a reputation; all the Parisian journals praising up his talents and the wonderful merit of his instrument.

"Tobias could not refrain from a moment of passion against the Italian who took to himself all the glory, whereas he, the maker of it, could claim so important a share. But this, thought he, his pride should suffer as an atonement for his deed, and he resigned himself not to complain; happy would he be, indeed, if he could regain possession of his fatal creation.

"As soon as he was informed of Signor Ballondini's address, he got into a *fiacre*, which he thought the most speedy means, but thanks to the proverbial slowness of that vehicle, he arrived at the virtuoso's lodgings exactly a quarter of an hour after his departure for Italy.

"Tobias followed him to Italy.

"It would be endless to describe all the places, and name all the hands, through which the wondrous violin passed. The most iron-like nerves could not endure its effects beyond a fortnight; and yet, no sooner had the proprietor thought of ridding himself of it, than another sprang up instantly, without allowing the instrument to lose any of its value. During two irksome years, unfortunate Tobias chased it through Italy, England, the West Indies, Spain, and lastly Germany, whither he returned having once more traversed France.

"After much fatigue and weariness, our violin-hunter arrived in Leipsig, where resided a bookseller who, he had been told, had recently purchased the instrument. This time, he arrived not too late, and the long-sought-for object was still in the possession of the person indicated. But, alas for Guarnerius! he had journeyed so many hundreds of miles, and through so very many lands, that howsoever rigid had been his economy, he nevertheless had exhausted his

funds, and now, on the point of purchasing the violin, the price of which had been constantly maintained to between 12,000 and 15,000 florins, he had barely a hundred florins left. He held council in his own mind, and all well considered, arrived at the conclusion, that of all thefts which man may be guilty of, that of a soul is undeniably the most odious; it became obvious to him, that the only possible means left to obliterate his former crime, was to commit another of a lesser kind; with the small sum he still possessed, he attempted to bribe a servant, and obtained admittance at night, within the bookseller's house, that he might steal the violin.

"But so ill-fated was this wretched man, that nothing could turn favourably with him. It so chanced that the bribed valet was an honest rogue, who having maturely reflected on the undeniable advantage of pocketing the price of a wicked action and not committing it, informed his master of the whole affair. Tobias was taken, cast into prison, and was nigh seeing his trials end in a dishonouring sentence. The dread of this misfortune brought to its climax a disease, which the violence of his ever-excited and never gratified desires, combined with his latter years of torment and agitation, had insensibly fostered in his constitution. In a word, an aneurism was ruptured, which necessitated his removal to the hospital.

"There, minute by minute, did he feel himself dying; and meanwhile the doctor, who treated him somewhat unceremoniously, had made him aware, that nothing could be done to restore his health; this naturally led him to expect he should escape the grasp of human laws; but, alas! he contemplated also the awful certainty of being soon summoned before Divine justice; there he knew he should have a difficult account to settle; still, he who had once been a devout Catholic, dared not now seek for consolation and better hopes in religion, terror-stricken as he was at the monstrosity of the avowal he had to make.

"One fine morning in autumn, a sunbeam was resting on his sick couch; this diffused cheerfulness around; a fresh breeze agitated the foliage of the trees beneath his window, and the birds chirped merrily in the branches. So much repose and happiness breathed in the air, that no one could have thought of dying on that day. The sight of enraptured nature had uplifted his mind to his Creator, and his heart, at length, turned lovingly towards the Infinite Bounty. He mustered sufficient courage to entrust his secret to a priest, that he might obtain absolution; the chaplain came to hear his confession, and a laborious one it was. He unburdened his heart, but the emotion he experienced, considerably weakened him, insomuch that as the priest proceeded with due unction and formal austerity, being in the habit of never giving absolution without previously quoting, at the very least, two lengthened fragments of his long since delivered orations on the Seven Deadly Sins. In this particular case, no portion referring specially to the moral state of his penitent, he had to combine several passages, borrowed from different sermons, which not a little complicated and lengthened the pious ministering; the last struggles of the patient, whose strength was visibly forsaking him, had already commenced ere all was accomplished. At last, he became utterly unconscious of what passed around, and the eloquent priest was ending his exhortations, when the squeaking and distant sound of a violin unpleasantly struck their ears. This noise, as may be inferred, had not the least effect on the sainted man whose office was now performed; not so, however, with poor Tobias, who felt this wild harmony echoing in the very marrow of his bones. He raised himself in a sitting posture, his hair standing on end, and a nervous trepidation contracting his features with dire anguish. He lent an attentive ear, and convulsively grasping the confessor's arm—

"'Hark! hark!' he exclaimed in a lamentable tone, 'hear you my mother's soul rising against me?' And after horrible contortions, which lasted several minutes, he gasped his last breath.

"Truly the wretched patient had been wrongly affected, for the sounds he had heard came from the violin of one of the hospital attendants, who, as of wont, the review of his patients and their tending being over, as also the dead being interred, practised the science of music, a propensity strongly developed amongst individuals of his avocation.

"At the very second which marked Guarnerius's last moments upon earth, the bookseller, the possessor of the

violin wonder, heard from within the case a loud vibration, similar to that of a string swiftly touched; having opened the case to examine the instrument he felt a slight breeze, not unlike that produced by a heavy breathing, pass before his face. All the strings had broken at the same time; the bridge and sound-post had fallen, and were heard rattling within the violin, which, however, was not otherwise damaged. An instrument maker was desired to repair this, but to no purpose; notwithstanding his efforts the violin had lost its wondrous properties. The change the more remarkable was, a total absence of its former over-exciting power. However, such as it was, dilettanti still considered it a *chef d'œuvre* of workmanship.

"Several months afterwards the rumour of the death of Tobias having spread through his native city, the Burgomaster's old servant, who had hitherto kept complete secrecy, communicated to his friends his suspicions, and the curiosity of the Bremese having been long since awakened by the mysterious disappearance of Tobias, he had but little to say to make the good people believe his report. They gathered before the shop, which had remained closed for more than three years, they broke the front part and rushed into the interior. Several objects of a suspicious kind, especially the transfusing apparatus and some few books, printed in foreign type, were found, and assisted not a little in throwing an unfavourable tinge over the memory of the instrument-maker, who happily left no one after him to bear his accursed name. The two following months were spent by the clergy in offering masses, paid for by the pious inhabitants of the city, for the soul of poor Brigitta Guarnerius.

"The morning after the act of popular justice I have related, the red crosses, which you observed on the shutters, were seen, but none could tell whose hand had traced these signs.

"Since this catastrophe the neighbouring people, yielding to the influence of their superstitious minds, assert that, during the night, sinister noises, of a most unearthly nature, are audible within the gloomy walls.

"Never since Tobias's departure has the landlord been able to find a tenant for the place, so he is at last determined to have it pulled down, an event which will give no slight satisfaction to the peaceful inhabitants of Bremen."

Thus related the witty and humorous magistrate. My great grandfather, naturally fond of ghostly and psychological narrations, cordially thanked his host, and hastened to repair to the shop, once inhabited by poor Guarnerius, with the intention of spending the night in that strange dwelling, and of witnessing with his own eyes whatever preternatural apparition might take place, which should contribute to the illustration of his psychological journal, from which we have extracted the pages now offered to our readers.

SOME GOSSIP ABOUT CHAPELIZOD.

Ghosts in Chapelizod, my good sir! "Why who knows not so?" A place that is itself a shadow of things past, the living spectre of old times. Chapelizod is all a ghost. If any one desires to see a suburban village of the once proud city of Dublin reduced to a marrowless skeleton, without a single speculation in its eye by which it can ever hope to rise again, let him go to Chapelizod. Dead walls; dead trees overhanging them; dead lights instead of windows in the houses; the men grave, the women lifeless, the little spirits squeaking and gibbering in the muddy streets! A veritable *caput mortuum* is Chapelizod. No wonder that Bob Martin should fancy he saw a ghost, for he was always looking at one.

It is just fifty years since Chapelizod was marked for the silent tomb, and condemned to perish by a lingering death. The cold hand of Centralisation, long before the insatiable monster was known by that name, clutched its first victim in Chapelizod. I barely remember the event. A heavy storm came down from the west; great rains had previously descended, and the angry spirit of the river screeched. I heard it myself running under the skew arch of the old bridge. There was lightning in the sky, and the clouds flew across the face of the moon like mad things. As yet the air was calm on the surface of the earth, but towards midnight the gale arose and tore up a number of trees in the Park. Before twenty-four hours we all perceived how easy it would have been to foresee what was coming, for in the course of the forenoon the order arrived for disbanding the *Royal Irish Artillery*. It was now no longer a mystery why it had *blown great guns* all the night.

That was the first special act of centralisation—always excepting the fatal centripetal movement from the house in College-green—which was perpetrated against Ireland. The glory of our national service was then extinguished, and Woolwich was made the arsenal sole of the United Kingdom. The royal regiment was broken up, its guns transferred to *Sarah Bridge*, its veterans drafted—as many of them as thought proper to merge their name in an undistinguished throng—into the general service, and not a few who had grown old in the troop found an asylum in the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham.

The transition of an old soldier from Chapelizod to Kilmainham was easy, the principal change consisting in putting off a blue coat to put on a red. They were not required to seek unaccustomed seats, or new associations among strangers, in whom the very accents of their tongue would awaken a prejudice against them, and make them objects of vulgar derision; but they dropped gently down the vale of years, amongst their own countrymen, near scenes hallowed to memory, still looking upon those hills which had exhilarated their hearts in the pride and prime of life, and inhaling breezes, wafted down the stream, which had braced and invigorated their lusty sinews, when they were "strong swimmers." They had friends and kindred at the old quarter, whom they continued to visit on festive occasions, "at the season of the year;" and it was pleasant to see the hearty old fellows, in their new "coats of scarlet," on the king's birth-day or a Whitsun-Monday, mixing with the crowd of villagers; one leading a little grandson by the hand, another engaged in cheering converse with a married daughter, or linked with some civil *remanet* of the bygone century, with whom, peradventure, he had quaffed many a social cup of ale; and all climbing the green slope that overhangs the Liffey, on their way to the grand review.

By degrees, as years rolled on, the bright red spots in that moving picture died out; but it was a consoling reflection to those who turned their thoughts to the evidence thus afforded of the sure and silent work of death, that the ties of life had not been abruptly or prematurely torn asunder by the cold hands of centralizing economy. They who had served their country faithfully and loyally in their youth, were suf-

fered to live out their full time, solaced by those attentions and sympathies, dearer far than the charity of dry *rations*, which public gratitude, aiding and giving effect to royal bounty, ungrudgingly secured for them.

But our new generation is wiser than to care for the feelings of men. The *heart* of this United Kingdom beats only and exclusively in the centre of its body; and thither all the life-blood of the land must flow. It may one day be found out, when pulsation refuses to answer at the extremities, that it is possible to overgorge the ventricles of that huge organ. At present, however, it is resolved to "take in all," regardless alike of charters, of rights, of common sense, and of common humanity. The Royal Hospital at Kilmainham is doomed to extinction.

It seems nothing that it was founded by royal charter, and by a rate levied upon the pay of soldiers serving in the army of Ireland, "to the end that such of the said army as have faithfully served their sovereign in the strength and vigour of their youth may, in the weakness and disaster that their old age, wounds, or other misfortunes may bring them into, find a comfortable retreat and a competent maintenance therein." It was endowed with lands, by an instrument which provides that "within the precincts of those lands shall be from henceforth, and shall *for ever* hereafter continue and be an hospital, in deed and name, for the receipt, abiding, and dwelling of such a number of poor, aged, maimed, and infirm soldiers, to be lodged, harboured, abide, and be relieved therein." The charter by which Trinity College holds its estates is not more sacred, nor the perpetual uses to which they must be applied more distinctly defined. Yet the Queen's government, upon its own mere motion and authority, has taken upon itself to root out this time-honoured foundation. The maimed and aged Irish soldier must henceforth find a "comfortable retreat" in Chelsea, where the voice of kinsman or friend will greet him no more. The sights and sounds, which bring back the days of youth with such a homefelt and soothing power to the memory of the aged, will be excluded from his eyes and ears, and he will die in cheerless exile, an unhappy and unthankful recipient of imperial alms.

It was well for the survivors of our National Artillery, that the faith of royal charters, and the kindly feelings of human nature were respected in their days. They had the satisfaction to feel, to their latest moment, that they possessed a country, and that their country had no disposition to disown them; so their end was peace.

Beside those who took service in the British army, or who retired for the remainder of their lives into the shelter provided for them in "the Hospital of King Charles the Second," there were many who, laying aside the military character, merged in the general body of society, and occupied themselves variously in civil employments, according to their natural leanings or abilities. Some few, who had adorned the old brigade in its palmy estate, disdained to quit the scene of its renown, but lingered about the ancient haunts till, one by one, they dropped into the grave. There was General Bettesworth, and his orderly man John Norton. The general inhabited a pretty place, now sadly dismantled, by the river side, and John was his gate-keeper. It was a sight to see them both stepping out for the parish church at Christmas, and the other high festivals, in the full uniform of their respective ranks, powdered, pomatum'd, and bequeued, as if they were sallying forth to be reviewed by Frederick William of Prussia. If Corporal Trim left a representative after him, it was John Norton: stiff in opinion, erect in stature, simple and honest as a child, pious as a parson. His master had all the gentle parts of human nature blended with the same high courage which distinguished my Uncle Toby.

Is it not strange how many people claim relation to "Uncle Toby?" Nobody thinks of calling him Tristram Shandy's uncle. He is "my uncle," your uncle, everybody's uncle. Sterne has managed to infuse that sweet touch into his nature, which makes the whole world kin to him, and proud to acknowledge it. But this by the bye.

An anecdote may here be related which illustrates the character of those primitive soldiers, and of the discipline of the service at the close of the eighteenth century. It happened one morning that John Norton was late at parade, and, as men sometimes do when they are hurried, he had made a mistake in his equipments, having put on his cross-belts wrong.

"Why, John Norton," said the general, "how is this? you have put on your belts the wrong way."

The men began to laugh, and John's ire was kindled; but he was too proud to look at his right hand or his left, to examine into the truth of the case.

"No, general," said he, "I have not."

"Oh but, indeed, John, you have."

"By all that's bad, general," said John, who had a trick of interlarding his discourse with this extraordinary invocation, "I have not."

"Well, then," said the patient commander, "we'll try. Fall in, John Norton. Attention! Carry arms! Prime and load."

All these manœuvres did John go through, like an automaton, until the last, when, laying his hand upon a bayonet where his cartouch-box ought to be, he exclaimed—

"By all that's bad, general, you're right."

According to the present strict rules of discipline in the British army a file of men would have been ordered to march so refractory a subject off to the guard-house; and if he were not tried by a regimental court-martial for insubordination, he might deem himself a fortunate individual. At all events, "good conduct" would never afterwards, should he continue in the service to the age of the Duke of Wellington, emblazon his discharge. But John Norton walked home beside the general's horse listening, with a meek and subdued spirit, to a friendly lecture upon the wisdom of sometimes supposing that others may be in the right as well as one's self.

At the other side of the river, nearly opposite to General Bettesworth's, but close to the village, are two adjoining brick houses, somewhat removed from the road. In one of these lived and died General Stratton. The other was occupied by Major Legge. The general was a venerable Ligonier-like man, and his wife a stately matron of the olden time, whom I seem to see this moment, with her stomacher and brocaded dress, and a long narrow scarf trimmed with the richest lace; her grey locks turned up, like flax round a distaff, over her forehead, and a towering bonnet of black silk over all. She was deemed a proud woman, but very good to the poor. As to her pride, I have heard no proof of it, except that she kept the village gossips at bay; but the reputation of her goodness is incontestable.

An *Emeritus* of a lower grade, but more formidable than the whole *Etat Major* to the juvenile imagination, was William Oulton Prosser, who from the post of a bombardier had retired to Ballyfermot Castle, where he opened an "academy" of liberal instruction. I still quail to remember him. It was only the other day that his name, written in round-hand across the title-page of a "Trusler's Chronology," purchased at Sharpe's auction-room, sent a thrill through me, as if it had been the wind of a round shot. He was a tall, stern-looking pedagogue, who never came down from his bedroom before eleven o'clock in the forenoon; and then he despatched a dirty servant-boy into the schoolroom, which was detached from the castle, to summon the boys on the black list to come in and be whipped. That operation he performed as if he had served in no other rank than that of a drummer all the days of his "sogering" upon earth; and it was administered in the breakfast parlour amid the *debris* of the repast (bread and butter and egg-shells), which the giant had just demolished to give him strength for the task. It had been his wont to inflict condign discipline in the midst of the school; but it happened on a day, that a boy, whose name was included in the usher's report, lay in ambush behind a heap of coats, in the porch; and as the ogre passed through, flourishing the formidable taws, and "chewing vengeance all the way," the poor wretch, in a frenzy of terror and despair, flew upon him, as a cat driven wild by persecution, and bit a large piece out of the calf of his leg. The big tyrant limped away into his den, and swore upon the family Bible that he would never again set foot in the said schoolroom, and that he would whip the said boy. He kept both the oaths, "in a sort of way," being obliged to compromise the matter with the delinquent, who agreed to save his Christian master's conscience, only on condition that the word of promise should be broken to the *hope*. A shadowy castigation, therefore (the ghost of a whipping), was submitted to; but from that hour the main business of the academy was carried on by deputies, remote from the eye of the

master. He still continued, however, to perform the part of an high justiciary, and to take cognizance of copy-books and arithmetical exercises, which the boys were required to exhibit to him in procession.

The remainder of his day was occupied principally in attending to the refrigerating process of some gallon of boiled water, in a huge white jug, which he filled every morning at the breakfast-table, and set upon the stone outside the window to cool. After dinner, this supply was placed on the table by his right hand, and corrected, *pro re natâ*, with whiskey, until, tumbler after tumbler, the whole of its contents disappeared. That was his stint; he never exceeded it; but as soon as it was finished, which was rarely before two or three o'clock next morning, he went to bed; and it depended on the quality of the spirit thus imbibed (the quantity being uniformly the same) in what degree of ill-humour he should apply himself to his professional duties of the following noon.

Such was the schoolmaster of one of the fashionable boarding-schools in the immediate vicinity of our capital some fifty years since. It was my fortune to be removed from under his *ferula* to that of another who had been an operative tailor—not an Alton Locke, though—and whose ignorance of everything but handwriting and Gough's Arithmetic, was far more astounding than that of the bombardier. He made up, however, in morality, for his shortcomings in erudition; and as they both kept tolerably competent ushers, and had an understanding of mutual profit with the bookseller, care was taken that their pupils should be supplied with a competent stock of tools for learning at all events; so we hobbled through the Latin and Greek course, *utcunque*, and Trinity College made the most of us afterwards.

If ever your ghost-seer extends his nocturnal saunterings towards Ballyfermot, about "the wee sma' hours ayont the twal," let him have an eye out for a large white jug with a red nightcap and a pair of green goggles; for as surely as drunken spirits are permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon, in that place and at such an hour will the schoolmaster be abroad.

Upon the dispersion of our own royal regiment, the Macleod Fencibles took up their quarters in the barrack, which thereupon stank horribly of cockaleekie every morning. A raw, wild, breekless tribe they were, fresh caught from the Highlands, at a period when the Trossachs were as inaccessible to the foot of civilised man as the Kyber Pass. The chief of the clan had collected and regimented them, selecting his own officers from the sons of his tacksmen and reivers, and few members of the mess could speak a dozen consecutive words of good English. The colonel, a fiery old Gael, and "vengeance proud," did his best to *lick* them into form, using his knuckles occasionally, it was said, for that purpose; and, indeed, a vigorous discipline was needful. They wrangled at dinner for the choice morsels of the various joints, three or four knives and forks being sometimes plunged at the same moment into one leg of mutton; and upon a certain occasion, when a large turbot was served, those who sate near the would-be carver saved him the trouble of apportioning it, by forking it away upon their own plates with their long bony fingers. This vexed the colonel exceedingly; for there were strangers at the table who had never dined at a Fencible mess before. For a whole week, therefore, he condemned them to leek-porridge, which was *eaten* with a spoon, while all the regimental pipers, seated (*more Scotico*) at the end of the apartment, blew "*Cauld Kail*," and other appetizing *refreins*, to bring them to an improving sense of the privations they were enduring. Many of those caterans were afterwards drafted into the general service, and attained the highest honours awarded to good soldiership. These, indeed, came to them by nature; but the acquisition of the manners of gentlemen was not so easy; yet more than one of the individuals, who scrambled on that memorable occasion for the turbot, have been deemed worthy to sit down at royal banquets, and were justly classed amongst the flower of North British chivalry.

The Carlow militia came next, a polite corps, but numbering some strange twists among its subalterns. The adjutant, one Clifford, had been raised from the ranks by the favour and discernment of Colonel Latouche. He was a humorous fellow, of a manly, independent mind, and scorned to hang his head at the remembrance of his origin. The General of Division, dining at the mess on the occasion of

a quarterly inspection, complimented Clifford upon the excellent state of drill in which he found the regiment, and, alluding to his name, asked "if he had any relations on the staff?"

"No, General," he replied, "but I have a great number on the spade."

It happened, on some occasion, that he displeased his colonel, who, in a hasty moment, declared his regret at having raised him from the state in which he had found him.

"Then, Colonel Latouche," said Clifford, "you are the first of your name that ever was sorry for doing a good action."

It is scarcely necessary to say that so adroit and just a compliment replaced him at once in his good patron's favour.

The pride of the old barrack was sorely tried afterwards, by various incursions of feather-beds which came in successively with the Wicklow, South Mayo, North Downshire, and Limerick regiments. Your shell-jacket dandies of this day would stare at the half-moon-shaped cocked hats, black leggings with innumerable small buttons, and draggle-tailed coats of their predecessors. But the hair-powder was worse than all. Can I ever forget Bob Gloster, of the *Garryowens*, on his return from the grand review one broiling *Fourth of June*, wiping away, with the sleeve of his new scarlet uniform, the streams of liquefied flour that meandered down his cheeks, and bewailing the day that he had "ever left the sweet *English Town*,* where he might have been reared up to an imminent marchant, to be melted out of creation like an althar-candle." Bob volunteered, shortly afterwards, into *the Line*, and became well used to the "melting mood" in Spain, where he soon earned for himself a pair of spurs; and when he came home, after the peace of Paris, Major Gloster, quite a polished cavalier, with a fine military accent, I should have liked to see the man who would remind him of his early chances of *imminence* in the mercantile line. It was of such materials that heroes were manufactured; and I could enumerate at least a dozen "ragged colts" who left that old barrack, in the midst of scenes of riot and drunkenness incidental to the volunteering system, and turned out "bra' chargers" at Vittoria, or on the plain of Waterloo.

But Chapelizod was not always a mere depot of Fencibles and militia. It was for a good while the head-quarters of the 92nd, or *Gordon Highlanders*, so truly described in Captain Grant's charming romance. They marched in, all brown and shrivelled by the sands of Egypt, though some years had passed since they had been there. A grave, orderly, religious body of men they were, who seemed always conscious that they were only here for a breathing time, and could not long be spared from the field of death. Their leader was Major Cameron, *the Fassifern*, who ended his career of glory at Waterloo. Authors who write "stories founded on facts" take a license to embellish their materials, and to exaggerate the moral as well as the physical attributes of the persons whom they introduce, according to the exigencies of the fable. But there is no exaggeration in Captain Grant's portrait of Cameron. It is a true representation of the man. His outward semblance and his frank and generous spirit, his nobility of mind and person, are painted with equal fidelity. To see that man in front of his regiment was a sight worthy of the olden time. John Kemble did not impart a more exalted notion of the figure of *Caius Marcius* as he rallied the Roman legions before *Corioli*, than Cameron's robust but stately form, the dignity of which was in no degree impaired by a slight and scarcely perceptible halt, the effect of a musket-shot in the knee which he had received in Egypt, gave the spectators of the men who had scattered England's chivalry at Bannockburn. If Walter Scott knew him, his picture of Fergus Mac Ivor, all perfect as it is, can scarcely claim the merit of originality.

No regimental biographer has attempted a history of "The Army of Reserve." It is a theme worthy of the pen of *Lorrequer* (now that poor Maxwell is gone, there is none other capable of doing it justice), and the materials for constructing it are fading rapidly out of the memory of mankind; yet Chapelizod still remembers "*the*

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* "The English Town" is a part of the ancient city of Limerick, which, so far as cleanliness is concerned, is justly considered "*Hibernia ipsa Hibernior.*"

Blackbelts." Who that ever saw can forget them? It is scarcely worth being sixty, indeed, or thereabouts, to have seen them; but since that would be in any case, it is a pride and a joy to have enjoyed the vision; for

"Eye ne'er shall look upon their like again."

The *Blackbelts,* so called because those decorations of military equipment in which the song exults as

"Your belts of white leather,"

were polished off as glossy as the raven's down across the shoulders and breasts of this distinguished corps, were known at the Horse Guards as the Second Garrison Battalion. They were physically, as the Sixtieth Regiment in those days was in a moral sense, the sweepings of the service. Every soldier who was blind of an eye, lame of a leg, maimed in an arm, crooked in form, or diminutive in size, and yet considered able to carry arms in the service of his sovereign, was drafted into the "*Blackbelts,*" and the officers were pretty nearly of a piece with the men. They reminded me of the little hairy men who came in swarms on board Sinbad's vessel and devoured everything, carnal and vegetable, they could stick their claws into. But they were a well-disciplined battalion, and efficient enough for the sort of duty they had to perform. Excellent shots too they were, every man of them. No rifle corps in any service could have surpassed them with the brown bess; a target was knocked to splinters by them in half-an-hour. They were specially employed, on this account, to escort deserters; for escape was not an uncommon thing while the corporal's guard were engaged in social chat along a dusty road. The prisoner would slip his wrist through the handcuff, bolt up a lane, and dodge his pursuers from hedge to hedge till he got clear off. But let a *Blackbelt* catch but a glimpse of his person emerging from a thicket or doubling round a corner, and he had him down as unerringly as O'Gorman Mahon would bag a woodcock.

Two or three incidents of this kind occurred during the stay of the battalion in Chapelizod. One of the occasions was very remarkable. A deserter broke loose in a crowded street and fled amongst men and women, who threw themselves purposely in the way, in order to facilitate his escape. But this manœuvre did not save him. The corporal levelled his musket, waited coolly till the wretch glanced for a moment into a vacant space, and then shot him dead. The fame of the *Blackbelts,* as sharp-shooters, and the unrelenting sternness with which they acted on such occasions, soon made them the terror of the service, and their prisoners ceased to hope for safety in sudden flight.

Before taking leave of the military reminiscences of Chapelizod, let me throw a Parthian glance upon the yeomanry corps commanded by Captain Wilcocks (the late Sir Richard), whose handsome and portly figure I still seem to behold, like a Colossus looking down upon the evolutions of his men. The vicar of the parish, a loyal man, who took a lively interest in the military education of those heroes, offered a gold medal to be shot for, at a distance of a hundred yards, upon the Palmerston fair-green. It was a great occasion, and all the beauty and fashion of three villages adorned it with their presence. There stood the captain to see fair play and encourage the nervous, while his permanent sergeant, Ned Bullard, was ready with a jeer and a joke at the service of every one that shot wide of the mark. The zealous parson, adumbrated by a *shovel* of such dimensions as we see not in these days of skimping economy, rode up and down the line exhorting the brave to fear nothing, but, remembering that the eyes of their country were upon them, to acquit them like men. Point blank was the practice on that memorable day. Had the target been a thing of life, it would have required to be of the feline species to have survived; for I have no doubt that at least nine out of the hundred bullets struck some part of its circumference. The victor was one Pierce Butler, a round, fat, oily son of Crispin, who had never discharged a bit of lead from a musket barrel before, and who approached his task as we may suppose King Agag to have approached the Prophet Samuel. With averted eye he raised the gun to his shoulder, pulled the trigger, in an agony of desperation, and falling back by the force of the rebound amongst his sympathizing fellow-soldiers, exclaimed, "Hould me up!" It was some time

before he could collect his scattered senses sufficiently to comprehend the cheers which announced that he had pierced *the bull's eye.* But when the great fact was made perfectly plain to his understanding, it was wonderful how promptly his spirit rose with his fortune, and with what a fiercely modest alacrity he strutted forward to the place where the vicar's niece, a charming young lady of eighteen, stood ready to invest him with the trophy. And now let me tell you that the only ghost of that corps that walks this firm set earth is the individual Bob Martin, whom your ghost-seer has so prematurely sent to his account. Bob is still as much as ever he was, which is not saying a great deal for him, extant amongst "articulate men," and, according to his own somewhat indignant account, has "as little call to sperrits, maybe, as gintlemen that takes greater liberties wid them."

But there was a Bob Martin once; the old Bob of all, who served the office of sexton when the population of Ireland scarcely amounted to three millions of interrable bodies. That man could have enwrinkled you all over with grave statistics. It was he that buried Luttrell, and saw the blue light flickering out of the coffin, when the first shovelful of black earth was cast upon it; and formidable were the stories which he related of the same Luttrell. Bob was for a long while "the oldest inhabitant," but, unlike that personage in general, he could remember many things; and he would tell them with a gusto, when engaged knee-deep, or deeper still, in his professional avocation. To him is the world indebted for a few fragments of *Satanic History,* collected from the transactions of "The Hellfire Club," every tittle of which he was prepared to verify before any tribunal.

The building of "*The Devil's Mills,*" on the Lower Road to Lucan, was one of those incontestable facts. They were built in one night, at the requisition of the redoubtable Luttrell, who being hard pressed to devise a task beyond the ability of the architect to perform (otherwise he could not get rid of his society, which began to be rather *ennuyant*), he commanded the mill to be erected. But that was no trouble. He looked out of the window, and saw it done.

"Throw a weir and dam across the river." *Presto,* there it was!

"Make me a rope of sand."

"Ah, there you have me," said the old gentleman, "for the devil himself cannot do that;" and so he was quit for that time. The ruined mill at Woodlands, on the Liffey bank, still attests the reality of this wonder.

Again, at an annual meeting of the club, at which whoever happened to be last in a certain saltatory movement of the whole assembly, became the lawful prey of the *grand master,* it was Luttrell's luck to be left behind. But his good genius did not forsake him.

"What are your eyes for?" he cried, nothing daunted. "Take the fellow that is coming after me."

The devil let go his prey and seized —*a shadow;* whence the remarkable fact, that, to the hour of his death, Luttrell never had a shadow. Bob Martin had seen him a dozen times, without a shadow. He could not swear, indeed, that the sun shone on such occasions; but of the material fact, that Luttrell belonged to the *ascii* of the earth, there could not be a possible doubt.

On a third occasion, when immersed in study—it would be curious to know the name of the volume—the old one peeping over his shoulder, gave him a familiar tap, and said:—

"Come down, and finish it at my fireside."

"Stay," said Luttrell, whose ready wit was never at a "*nonplush,*" I have a codicil to add to my will. Give me a delay till this inch of candle is burned out."

The request seemed so moderate, that it was granted without hesitation.

"Upon your honour?"

"As I'm a gentleman."

"Then, perhaps, you'll have no objection to sit a short time in the dark?"

So said, so done. He blew out the candle, locked it up in his desk, marked the sign of the cross over the keyhole, and requested his friend to ring the bell for fresh lights.

Now, though Bob was a staunch Protestant, and held mutterings in as much contempt as Lord John Russell, he believed most firmly that nothing could have hindered the old gentleman from following that inch of candle into the desk, and annihilating it with one puff of his breath, if the sign of the cross

had not been so timely interposed to bar him out.

But Bob's conversation was rich in remembrances of better men. His father had been married by "the Dane," whereby he meant Dean Swift, and a considerable proportion of his store of traditionary anecdote was connected, more or less, with that great name; nor was he singular in that. All the old men of his time preserved a lively sense of the wit and patriotism of the eccentric Drapier. They could tell all that is written, and a great deal that is not written, illustrative of his peculiar humour. As for Bob, he was able to point out the particular spot on the Castleknock road, where he stopped his horse to bargain with a cow-boy for a secret whereby he was enabled to prognosticate the weather. The dean had passed by, lightly clad, in full confidence that the weather would continue fair.

"Go back for your cloak, sir," said the urchin; "it will rain."

Without heeding the warning, he passed on; and in an hour's time was wet to the skin. He returned to the spot, and demanded how the boy could foresee the shower? The youngster required half-a-crown for the information, which having obtained after some chaffering, he said:—

"You see that big stone, your reverence, in the middle of the field. Well, whenever you want to know if it is going to rain, come to that place, and if you find the bull scratching himself against that big stone, you may be sure of it."

To that big stone many a chuckling sexagenarian could point, as a memento of "the Dane," whose memory the whole community loved and revered, having been outwitted for once by a poor country boy. It may stand there yet, for aught I can tell.

It was surely something, when the peasantry of a whole district were accustomed to amuse one another with the sayings and doings of the greatest of the wits of Queen Anne. The schoolmaster may have done much for the world in the last half-century, but he certainly has not raised the minds or improved the taste of that class. There are very few Bob Martins, in whose mouths the names of Swift, and Sheridan, and Delany, and Archbishop Boulter are now as "familiar as household words."

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME STRANGE DISTURBANCES IN AN OLD HOUSE IN AUNGIER-STREET.

It is not worth telling, this story of mine — at least, not worth writing. Told, indeed, as I have sometimes been called upon to tell it, to a circle of intelligent and eager faces, lighted up by a good after-dinner fire on a winter's evening, with a cold wind rising and wailing outside, and all snug and cosy within, it has gone off — though I say it, who should not — indifferent well. But it is a venture to do as you would have me. Pen, ink, and paper are cold vehicles for the marvellous, and a "reader" decidedly a more critical animal than a "listener." If, however, you can induce your friends to read it after nightfall, and when the fireside talk has run for a while on thrilling tales of shapeless terror; in short, if you will secure me the "*mollia tempora fundi*," I will go to my work, and say my say, with better heart. Well, then, these conditions presupposed, I shall waste no more words, but tell you simply how it all happened.

My cousin (Tom Ludlow) and I studied medicine together. I think he would have succeeded, had he stuck to the profession; but he preferred the Church, poor fellow, and died early, a sacrifice to contagion, contracted in the noble discharge of his duties. For my present purpose, I say enough of his character when I mention, that he was of a sedate but frank and cheerful nature; very exact in his observance of truth, and not by any means like myself — of an excitable or nervous temperament.

My uncle Ludlow — Tom's father — while we were attending lectures, purchased three or four old houses in Aungier-street, one of which was unoccupied. *He* resided in the country, and Tom proposed that we should take up our abode in the untenanted house, so long as it should continue unlet; a move which would accomplish the double end of settling us nearer alike to our lecture-rooms and to our amusements, and of relieving us from the weekly charge of rent for our lodgings.

Our furniture was very scant — our whole equipage remarkably modest and primitive; and, in short, our arrangements pretty nearly as simple as those of a bivouac. Our new plan was, therefore, executed almost as soon as conceived. The front drawing-room was our sitting-room. I had the bedroom over it, and Tom the back bedroom on the same floor, which nothing could have induced me to occupy.

The house, to begin with, was a very old one. It had been, I believe, newly fronted about fifty years before; but, with this exception, it had nothing modern about it. The agent who bought it and looked into the titles for my uncle, told me that it was sold, along with much other forfeited property, at Chichester-House, I think, in 1702; and had belonged to Sir Thomas Hacket, who was Lord Mayor of Dublin in James II.'s time. How old it was *then*, I can't say; but, at all events, it had seen years and changes enough to have contracted all that mysterious and saddened air, at once exciting and depressing, which belongs to most old mansions.

There had been very little done in the way of modernising details; and, perhaps, it was better so; for there was something queer and by-gone in the very walls and ceilings — in the shape of doors and windows — in the odd diagonal site of the chimneypieces — in the beams and ponderous cornices — not to mention the singular solidity of all the wood-work, from the banisters to the window-frames, which hopelessly defied disguise, and would have emphatically proclaimed their antiquity through any conceivable amount of modern finery and varnish.

An effort had, indeed, been made to the extent of papering the drawing-rooms; but somehow, the paper looked raw and out of keeping; and the old woman, who kept a little dirt-pie of a shop in the lane, and whose daughter — a girl of two and fifty — was our solitary handmaid, coming in at sunrise, and chastely receding again so soon as she had made all ready for tea in our state apartment; — this woman, I say, remembered it, when old Judge Horrocks (who, having earned the reputation

of a particularly "hanging judge," ended by hanging himself, as the coroner's jury found, under an impulse of "temporary insanity," with a child's skipping-rope, over the massive old banisters) resided there, entertaining good company, with fine venison and rare old port. In those halcyon days, the drawing-rooms were hung with gilded leather, and, I dare say, cut a good figure, for they were really spacious rooms.

The bedrooms were wainscotted, but the front one was not gloomy; and in it the cosiness of antiquity quite overcame its sombre associations. But the back bedroom, with its two queerly-placed melancholy windows, staring vacantly at the foot of the bed, and with the shadowy recess to be found in most old houses in Dublin, like a large ghosty closet, which, from congeniality of temperament, had amalgamated with the bedchamber, and dissolved the partition. At night-time, this "alcove" —as our "maid" was wont to call it— had, in my eyes, a specially sinister and suggestive character. Tom's distant and solitary candle glimmered vainly into its darkness. *There* it was always overlooking him—always itself impenetrable. But this was only part of the effect. The whole room was, I can't tell how, repulsive to me. There was, I suppose, in its proportions and features, a latent discord — a certain mysterious and indescribable relation, which jarred indistinctly upon some secret sense of the fitting and the safe, and raised indefinable suspicions and apprehensions of the imagination. On the whole, as I began by saying, nothing could have induced me to pass a night alone in it.

I had never pretended to conceal from poor Tom my superstitious weakness; and he, on the other hand, most unaffectedly ridiculed my tremors. The sceptic was, however, destined to receive a lesson, as you shall hear.

We had not been very long in occupation of our respective dormitories, when I began to complain of uneasy nights and disturbed sleep. I was, I suppose, the more impatient under this annoyance, as I was usually a sound sleeper, and by no means prone to nightmares. It was now, however, my destiny, instead of enjoying my customary repose, every night to "sup full of horrors." After a preliminary course of disagreeable and frightful dreams, my troubles took a definite form, and the same vision, without an appreciable variation in a single detail, visited me at least (on an average) every second night in the week.

Now, this dream, nightmare, or infernal illusion — which you please — of which I was the miserable sport, was on this wise:—I saw, or thought I saw, with the most abominable distinctness, although at the time in profound darkness, every article of furniture and accidental arrangement of the chamber in which I lay. This, as you know, is incidental to ordinary nightmare. Well, while in this clairvoyant condition, which seemed but the lighting up of the theatre in which was to be exhibited the monotonous tableau of horror, which made my nights insupportable, my attention invariably became, I know not why, fixed upon the windows opposite the foot of my bed; and, uniformly with the same effect. A sense of dreadful anticipation always took slow but sure possession of me. I became somehow conscious of a sort of horrid but undefined preparation going forward in some unknown quarter, and by some unknown agency, for my torment; and, after an interval, which always seemed to me of the same length, a picture suddenly flew up to the window, where it remained fixed, as if by an electrical attraction, and my discipline of horror then commenced, to last perhaps for hours. The picture thus mysteriously glued to the window-panes, was the portrait of an old man, in a crimson flowered silk dressing-gown, the folds of which I could now describe, with a countenance embodying a strange mixture of intellect, sensuality, and power, but withal sinister and full of malignant omen. His nose was hooked, like the beak of a vulture; his eyes large, grey, and prominent, and lighted up with a more than mortal cruelty and coldness. These features were surmounted by a crimson velvet cap, the hair that peeped from under which was white with age, while the eyebrows retained their original blackness. Well I remember every line, hue, and shadow of that stony countenance, and well I may! The gaze of this hellish visage was fixed upon me, and mine returned it with the inexplicable fascination of nightmare, for what appeared to me to be hours of agony. At last—

"The cock he crew, away then flew"

the fiend who had enslaved me through the awful watches of the night; and, harassed and nervous, I rose to the duties of the day.

I had—I can't say exactly why, but it may have been from the exquisite anguish and profound impressions of unearthly horror, with which this strange phantasmagoria was associated — an insurmountable antipathy to describing the exact nature of my nightly troubles to my friend and comrade. Generally, however, I told him that I was haunted by abominable dreams; and, true to the imputed materialism of medicine, we put our heads together to dispel my horrors, not by an exorcism, but by a tonic.

I will do this tonic justice, and frankly admit that the accursed portrait began to intermit its visits under its influence. What of that? Was this singular apparition—as full of character as of terror—therefore the creation of my fancy, or the invention of my poor stomach? Was it, in short, *subjective* (to borrow the technical slang of the day), and not the palpable aggression and intrusion of an external agent? That, good friend, as we will both admit, by no means follows. The evil spirit, who enthralled my senses in the shape of that portrait, may have been just as near me, just as energetic, just as malignant, though I saw him not. What means the whole moral code of revealed religion regarding the due keeping of our own bodies, soberness, temperance, &c.? Here is an obvious connexion between the material and the invisible; the healthy tone of the system, and its unimpaired energy, may, for aught we can tell, guard us against influences which would otherwise render life itself terrific. The mesmerist and the electro-biologist will fail upon an average with nine patients out of ten — so may the evil spirit. Special conditions of the corporeal system are indispensable to the production of certain spiritual phenomena. The operation succeeds sometimes — sometimes fails—that is all.

I found afterwards that my would-be sceptical companion had his troubles too. But of these I knew nothing yet. One night, for a wonder, I was sleeping soundly, when I was roused by a step on the lobby outside my room, followed by the loud clang of what turned out to be a large brass candlestick, flung with all his force by poor Tom Ludlow over the banisters, and rattling with a rebound down the second flight of stairs; and almost concurrently with this, Tom burst open my door, and bounced into my room backwards, in a state of extraordinary agitation.

I had jumped out of bed and clutched him by the arm before I had any distinct idea of my own whereabouts. There we were—in our shirts—standing before the open door — staring through the great old banister opposite, at the lobby window, through which the sickly light of a clouded moon was gleaming.

"What's the matter, Tom? What's the matter with you? What the devil's the matter with you, Tom?" I demanded, shaking him with nervous impatience.

He took a long breath before he answered me, and then it was not very coherently.

"It's nothing, nothing at all—did I speak?—what did I say?—where's the candle, Richard? It's dark; I—I had a candle!"

"Yes, dark enough," I said; "but what's the matter?—what *is* it?—why don't you speak, Tom?—have you lost your wits?—what is the matter?"

"The matter? — oh, it is all over. It must have been a dream — nothing at all but a dream — don't you think so? It could not be anything more than a dream."

"Of *course*," said I, feeling uncommonly nervous, "it *was* a dream."

"I thought," he said, "there was a man in my room, and—and I jumped out of bed; and — and — where's the candle?"

"In your room, most likely," I said; "shall I go and bring it?"

"No; stay here—don't go; it's no matter—don't, I tell you; it was all a dream. Bolt the door, Dick; I'll stay here with you — I feel nervous. So, Dick, like a good fellow, light your candle and open the window—I am in a *shocking state*."

I did as he asked me, and robing himself like Granuaile in one of my blankets, he seated himself close beside my bed.

Every body knows how contagious is fear of all sorts, but more especially that particular kind of fear under which poor Tom was at that moment labouring. I would not have heard, nor I believe would he have recapitu-

lated, just at that moment, for half the world, the details of the hideous vision which had so unmanned him.

"Don't mind telling me anything about your nonsensical dream, Tom," said I, affecting contempt, really in a panic; "let us talk about something else; but it is quite plain that this dirty old house disagrees with us both, and hang me if I stay here any longer, to be pestered with indigestion and —and—bad nights, so we may as well look out for lodgings—don't you think so?—at once."

Tom agreed, and, after an interval, said—

"I have been thinking, Richard, that it is a long time since I saw my father, and I have made up my mind to go down to-morrow and return in a day or two, and you can take rooms for us in the meantime."

I fancied that this resolution, obviously the result of the vision which had so profoundly scared him, would probably vanish next morning with the damps and shadows of night. But I was mistaken. Off went Tom at peep of day to the country, having agreed that so soon as I had secured suitable lodgings, I was to recall him by letter from his visit to my Uncle Ludlow.

Now, anxious as I was to change my quarters, it so happened, owing to a series of petty procrastinations and accidents, that nearly a week elapsed before my bargain was made and my letter of recall on the wing to Tom; and, in the meantime, a trifling adventure or two had occurred to your humble servant, which, absurd as they now appear, diminished by distance, did certainly at the time serve to whet my appetite for change considerably.

A night or two after the departure of my comrade, I was sitting by my bedroom fire, the door locked, and the ingredients of a tumbler of hot whisky-punch upon the crazy spider-table; for, as the best mode of keeping the

"Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and grey,"

with which I was environed, at bay, I had adopted the practice recommended by the wisdom of my ancestors, and "kept my spirits up by pouring spirits down." I had thrown aside my volume of "Anatomy," and was treating myself by way of a tonic, preparatory to my punch and bed, to half-a-dozen pages of the "Spectator," when I heard a step on the flight of stairs descending from the attics. It was two o'clock, and the streets were as silent as a churchyard—the sounds were, therefore, perfectly distinct. There was a slow, heavy tread, characterised by the emphasis and deliberation of age, descending by the narrow staircase from above; and, what made the sound more singular, it was plain that the feet which produced it were perfectly bare, measuring the descent with something between a pound and a flop, very ugly to hear.

I knew quite well that my attendant had gone away many hours before, and that nobody but myself had any business in the house. It was quite plain also that the person who was coming down stairs had no intention whatever of concealing his movements; but, on the contrary, appeared disposed to make even more noise, and proceed more deliberately, than was at all necessary. When the step reached the foot of the stairs outside my room, it seemed to stop; and I expected every moment to see my door open spontaneously, and give admission to the original of my detested portrait. I was, however, relieved in a few seconds by hearing the descent renewed, just in the same manner, upon the staircase leading down to the drawing-rooms, and thence, after another pause, down the next flight, and so on to the hall, whence I heard no more.

Now, by the time the sound had ceased, I was wound up, as they say, to a very unpleasant pitch of excitement. I listened, but there was not a stir. I screwed up my courage to a decisive experiment—opened my door, and in a Stentorian voice bawled over the banisters, "Who's there?" There was no answer, but the ringing of my own voice through the empty old house —no renewal of the movement; nothing, in short, to give my unpleasant sensations a definite direction. There is, I think, something most disagreeably disenchanting in the sound of one's own voice under such circumstances, exerted in solitude, and in vain. It redoubled my sense of isolation, and my misgivings increased on perceiving that the door, which I certainly thought I had left open, was closed behind me; in a vague alarm, lest my retreat should be cut off, I got again into my room as quickly as I could, where I remained in a state of imaginary block-

ade, and very uncomfortable indeed, till morning.

Next night brought no return of my barefooted fellow-lodger; but the night following, being in my bed, and in the dark — somewhere, I suppose, about the same hour as before, I distinctly heard the old fellow again descending from the garrets.

This time I had had my punch, and the *morale* of the garrison was consequently excellent. I jumped out of bed, clutched the poker as I passed the expiring fire, and in a moment was upon the lobby. The sound had ceased by this time — the dark and chill were discouraging; and, guess my horror, when I saw, or thought I saw, a black monster, whether in the shape of a man or a bear I could not say, standing, with its back to the wall, on the lobby, facing me, with a pair of great greenish eyes shining dimly out. Now, I must be frank, and confess that the cupboard which displayed our plates and cups stood just there, though at the moment I did not recollect it. At the same time I must honestly say, that making every allowance for an excited imagination, I never could satisfy myself that I was made the dupe of my own fancy in this matter; for this apparition, after one or two shiftings of shape, as if in the act of incipient transformation, began, as it seemed on second thoughts, to advance upon me in its original form. From an instinct of terror rather than of courage, I hurled the poker, with all my force, at its head; and to the music of a horrid crash made my way into my room, and double-locked the door. Then, in a minute more, I heard the horrid bare feet walk down the stairs, till the sound ceased in the hall, as on the former occasion.

If the apparition of the night before was an ocular delusion of my fancy sporting with the dark outlines of our cupboard, and if its horrid eyes were nothing but a pair of inverted teacups, I had, at all events, the satisfaction of having launched the poker with admirable effect, and in true "fancy" phrase, "knocked its two daylights into one," as the commingled fragments of my tea-service testified. I did my best to gather comfort and courage from these evidences; but it would not do. And then what could I say of those horrid bare feet, and the regular tramp, tramp, tramp, which measured the distance of the entire staircase through the solitude of my haunted dwelling, and at an hour when no good influence was stirring? Confound it! — the whole affair was abominable. I was out of spirits, and dreaded the approach of night.

It came, ushered ominously in with a tunder-storm and dull torrents of depressing rain. Earlier than usual the streets grew silent; and by twelve o'clock nothing but the comfortless pattering of the rain was to be heard.

I made myself as snug as I could. I lighted *two* candles, instead of one. I forswore bed, and held myself in readiness for a sally, candle in hand; for, *coute qui coute*, I was resolved to *see* the being, if visible at all, who troubled the nightly stillness of my mansion. I was fidgetty and nervous, and tried in vain to interest myself with my books. I walked up and down my room, whistling in turn martial and hilarious music, and listening ever and anon for the dreaded noise. I sate down and stared at the square label on the solemn and reserved-looking black bottle, until "FLANAGAN AND CO.'S BEST OLD MALT WHISKY" grew into a sort of subdued accompaniment to all the fantastic and horrible speculations which chased one another through my brain.

Silence, meanwhile, grew more silent, and darkness darker. I listened in vain for the rumble of a vehicle, or the mellowed clamor of a distant row. There was nothing but the sound of a rising wind, which had succeeded the thunder-storm that had travelled over the Dublin mountains quite out of hearing. In the middle of this great city I began to feel myself alone with nature, and Heaven knows what beside. My courage was ebbing. Punch, however, which makes beasts of so many, made a man of me again — just in time to hear with tolerable nerve and firmness the lumpy, flabby, naked feet deliberately descending the stairs again.

I took a candle, not without a tremor. As I crossed the floor I tried to extemporise a prayer, but stopped short to listen, and never finished it. The steps continued. I confess I hesitated for some seconds at the door before I took heart of grace and opened it. When I peeped out the lobby was perfectly empty — there was no monster standing on the staircase; and, as the detested sound ceased, I was reassured enough to venture forward nearly to

the banisters. Horror of horrors! within a stair or two beneath the spot where I stood the unearthly tread smote the floor. My eye caught something in motion; it was about the size of Goliah's foot — it was grey, heavy, and flapped with a dead weight from one step to another. As I am alive, it was the most monstrous grey rat I ever beheld or imagined.

Shakspeare says—"Some men there are cannot abide a gaping pig, and some that are mad if they behold a cat." I went well-nigh out of my wits when I beheld this *rat;* for, laugh at me as you may, it fixed upon me, I thought, a perfectly human expression of malice; and, as it shuffled about and looked up into my face almost from between my feet, I saw, I could swear it—I felt it then, and know it now, the infernal gaze and the accursed countenance of my old friend in the portrait, transfused into the visage of the bloated vermin before me.

I bounced into my room again with a feeling of loathing and horror I cannot describe, and locked and bolted my door as if a lion had been at the other side. D—n him or *it;* curse the portrait and its original! I felt in my soul that the rat—yes, the *rat,* the RAT I had just seen, was that evil being in masquerade, and rambling through the house upon some infernal night lark.

Next morning I was early trudging through the miry streets; and, among other transactions, posted a peremptory note recalling Tom. On my return, however, I found a letter from my absent "chum," announcing his intended return next day. I was doubly rejoiced at this, because I had succeeded in getting rooms; and because the change of scene and return of my comrade were rendered specially pleasant by the last night's half ridiculous half horrible adventure.

I slept extemporaneously in my new quarters in Digges'-street that night, and next morning returned for breakfast to the haunted mansion, where I was certain Tom would call immediately on his arrival.

I was quite right—he came; and almost his first question referred to the primary object of our change of residence.

"Thank God," he said with genuine fervor, on hearing that all was arranged. "On *your* account I am delighted. As to myself, I assure you that no earthly consideration could have induced me ever again to pass a night in this disastrous old house."

"Confound the house!" I ejaculated, with a genuine mixture of fear and detestation, "we have not had a pleasant hour since we came to live here;" and so I went on, and related incidentally my adventure with the plethoric old rat.

"Well, if that were *all,*" said my cousin, affecting to make light of the matter, "I don't think I should have minded it very much."

"Ay, but its eye—its countenance, my dear Tom," urged I; "if you had seen *that,* you would have felt it might be *any*thing but what it seemed."

"I incline to think the best conjurer in such a case would be an able-bodied cat," he said, with a provoking chuckle.

"But let us hear your own adventure," I said, tartly.

At this challenge he looked uneasily round him. I had poked up a very unpleasant recollection.

"You shall hear it, Dick; I'll tell it to you," he said. "Begad, sir, I should feel quite queer, though, in telling it *here,* though we are too strong a body for ghosts to meddle with just now."

Though he spoke this like a joke, I think it was a serious calculation. Our Hebe was in a corner of the room, unpacking our cracked delf tea and dinner-services in a basket. She soon suspended operations, and with mouth and eyes wide open became an absorbed listener. Tom's experiences were told nearly in these words:—

"I saw it three times, Dick — three distinct times; and I am perfectly certain it meant me some infernal harm. I was, I say, in danger — in *extreme* danger; for, if nothing else had happened, my reason would most certainly have failed me, unless I had escaped so soon. Thank God, I *did* escape.

"The first night of this hateful disturbance, I was lying in the attitude of sleep, in that lumbering old bed. I hate to think of it. I was really wide awake, though I had put out my candle, and was lying as quietly as if I had been asleep; and although accidentally restless, my thoughts were running in a cheerful and agreeable channel.

"I think it must have been two o'clock at least when I thought I heard a

sound in that—that odious dark recess at the far end of the bedroom. It was as if some one was drawing a piece of cord slowly along the floor, lifting it up, and dropping it softly down again in coils. I sate up once or twice in my bed, but could see nothing, so I concluded it must be mice in the wainscot. I felt no emotion graver than curiosity, and after a few minutes ceased to observe it.

While lying in this state, strange to say, without at first a suspicion of anything supernatural, on a sudden I saw an old man, rather stout and square, in a sort of roan-red dressing-gown, and with a black cap on his head, moving stiffly and slowly in a diagonal direction, from the recess, across the floor of the bedroom, passing my bed at the foot, and entering the lumber-closet at the left. He had something under his arm; his head hung a little at one side; and, merciful God! when I saw his face."

Tom stopped for a while, and then said—

"That awful countenance, which living or dying I never can forget, disclosed what he was. Without turning to the right or left, he passed beside me, and entered the closet by the bed's head.

"While this fearful and indescribable type of death and guilt was passing, I felt that I had no more power to speak or stir than if I had been myself a corpse. For hours after it had disappeared I was too terrified and weak to move. As soon as daylight came, I took courage, and examined the room, and especially the course which the frightful intruder had seemed to take, but there was not a vestige to indicate anybody's having passed there; no sign of any disturbing agency visible among the lumber that strewed the floor of the closet.

"I now began to recover a little. I was fagged and exhausted, and at last, overpowered by a feverish sleep. I came down late; and finding you out of spirits, on account of your dreams about the portrait, whose *original* I am now certain disclosed himself to me, I did not care to talk about the infernal vision. In fact, I was trying to persuade myself that the whole thing was an illusion, and I did not like to revive in their intensity the hated impressions of the past night — or, to risk the constancy of my scepticism, by recounting the tale of my sufferings.

"It required some nerve, I can tell you, to go to my haunted chamber next night, and lie down quietly in the same bed," continued Tom. "I did so with a degree of trepidation, which, I am not ashamed to say, a very little matter would have sufficed to stimulate to downright panic. This night, however, passed off quietly enough, as also the next; and so too did two or three more. I grew more confident, and began to fancy that I believed in the theories of spectral illusions, with which I had at first vainly tried to impose upon my convictions.

"The apparition had been, indeed, altogether anomalous. It had crossed the room without any recognition of my presence: I had not disturbed *it*, and *it* had no mission to *me*. What, then, was the imaginable use of its crossing the room in a visible shape at all? Of course it might have *been* in the closet instead of *going* there, as easily as it introduced itself into the recess without entering the chamber in a shape discernible by the senses. Besides, how the deuce *had* I seen it? It was a dark night; I had no candle; there was no fire; and yet I saw it as distinctly, in colouring and outline, as ever I beheld human form! A cataleptic dream would explain it all; and I was determined that a dream it should be.

"One of the most remarkable phenomena connected with the practice of mendacity is the vast number of deliberate lies we tell to ourselves, whom, of all persons, we can least expect to deceive. In all this, I need hardly tell you, Dick, I was simply lying to myself, and did not believe one word of the wretched humbug. Yet I went on, as men will do, like persevering charlatans and impostors, who tire people into credulity by the mere force of reiteration; so I hoped to win myself over at last to a comfortable scepticism about the ghost.

"He had not appeared a second time —that certainly was a comfort; and what, after all, did I care for him, and his queer old toggery and strange looks? Not a fig! I was nothing the worse for having seen him, and a good story the better. So I tumbled into bed, put out my candle, and, cheered by a loud drunken quarrel in the back lane, went fast asleep.

"From this deep slumber I awoke with a start. I knew I had had a horrible dream; but what it was I could not remember. My heart was thumping furiously; I felt bewildered and feverish; I sate up in the bed, and looked about the room. A broad flood of moonlight came in through the curtainless window; everything was as I had last seen it; and though the domestic squabble in the back lane was, unhappily for me, allayed, I yet could hear a pleasant fellow singing, on his way home, the then popular comic ditty called, 'Murphy Delany.' Taking advantage of this diversion I lay down again, with my face towards the fireplace, and closing my eyes, did my best to think of nothing else but the song, which was every moment growing fainter in the distance:—

"'Twas Murphy Delany, so funny and frisky,
Stept into a shebeen shop to get his skin full;
He reeled out again pretty well lined with whiskey,
As fresh as a shamrock, as blind as a bull.'

"The singer, whose condition I dare say resembled that of his hero, was soon too far off to regale my ears any more; and as his music died away, I myself sank into a doze, neither sound nor refreshing. Somehow the song had got into my head, and I went meandering on through the adventures of my respectable fellow-countryman, who, on emerging from the 'shebeen shop,' fell into a river, from which he was fished up to be 'sat upon' by a coroner's jury, who having learned from 'a horse-doctor' that he was 'dead as a door-nail, so there was an end,' returned their verdict accordingly, just as he returned to his senses; when an angry altercation and a pitched battle between the body and the coroner winds up the lay with due spirit and pleasantry.

"Through this ballad I continued with a weary monotony to plod, down to the very last line, and then *da capo*, and so on, in my uncomfortable half-sleep, for how long, I can't conjecture. I found myself at last, however, muttering '*dead* as a door-nail, so there was an end;' and something like another voice within me, seemed to say, very faintly, but sharply, 'dead! dead! *dead!* and may the Lord have mercy on your soul!' and instantaneously I was wide awake, and staring right before me from the pillow.

"Now—will you believe it, Dick?—I saw the same accursed figure standing full front, and gazing at me with its stony and fiendish countenance, not two yards from the bedside."

Tom stopped here, and wiped the perspiration from his face. I felt very queer. The girl was as pale as Tom; and, assembled as we were in the very scene of these adventures, we were all, I dare say, equally grateful for the clear daylight and the resuming bustle out of doors.

"For about three seconds only I saw it plainly; then it grew indistinct; but, for a long time, there was something like a column of dark vapour where it had been standing, between me and the wall; and I felt sure that he still was there. After a good while, this appearance went too. I took my clothes down stairs to the hall, and dressed there, with the door half open; then went out into the street, and walked about the town till morning, when I came back, in a miserable state of nervousness and exhaustion. I was such a fool, Dick, as to be ashamed to tell you how I came to be so upset. I thought you would laugh at me; especially as I had always talked philosophy, and treated *your* ghosts with contempt. I concluded you would give me no quarter; and so kept my tale of horror to myself.

"Now, Dick, you will hardly believe me, when I assure you, that for many nights after this last experience, I did not go to my room at all. I used to sit up for a while in the drawing-room after you had gone up to your bed; and then steal down softly to the hall-door, let myself out, and sit in the 'Robin Hood' tavern until the last guest went off; and then I got through the night like a sentry, pacing the streets till morning.

"For more than a week I never slept in a bed. I sometimes had a snooze on a form in the 'Robin Hood,' and sometimes a nap in a chair during the day; but regular sleep I had absolutely none.

"I was quite resolved that we should get into another house; but I could not bring myself to tell you the reason, and I somehow put it off from day to day, although my life was, during every hour of this procrastination, rendered as miserable as that of a felon with the constables on his track. I was growing absolutely ill from this wretched mode of life.

"One afternoon I determined to enjoy an hour's sleep upon your bed. I hated mine; so that I had never, except in a stealthy visit every day to unmake it, lest Martha should discover the secret of my nightly absence, entered the ill-omened chamber.

"As ill-luck would have it, you had locked your bedroom, and taken away the key. I went into my own to unsettle the bedclothes, as usual, and give the bed the appearance of having been slept in. Now, a variety of circumstances concurred to bring about the dreadful scene through which I was that night to pass. In the first place, I was literally overpowered with fatigue, and longing for sleep; in the next place, the effect of this extreme exhaustion upon my nerves resembled that of a narcotic, and rendered me less susceptible than, perhaps, I should in any other condition have been, of the exciting fears which had become habitual to me. Then again, a little bit of the window was open, a pleasant freshness pervaded the room, and, to crown all, the cheerful sun of day was making the room quite pleasant. What was to prevent my enjoying an hour's nap *here?* The whole air was resonant with the cheerful hum of life, and the broad matter-of-fact light of day filled every corner of the room.

"I yielded—stifling my qualms—to the almost overpowering temptation; and merely throwing off my coat, and loosening my cravat, I lay down, limiting myself to *half*-an-hour's doze in the unwonted enjoyment of a feather bed, a coverlet, and bolster.

"It was horribly insidious; and the demon, no doubt, marked my infatuated preparations. Dolt that I was, I fancied, with mind and body worn out for want of sleep, and an arrear of a full week's rest to my credit, that such a measure as *half*-an-hour's sleep, in such a situation, was possible. My sleep was death-like, long, and dreamless.

"Without a start or fearful sensation of any kind, I waked gently, but completely. It was, as you have good reason to remember, long past midnight—I believe, about two o'clock. When sleep has been deep and long enough to satisfy nature thoroughly, one often wakens in this way, suddenly, tranquilly, and completely.

"There was a figure seated in that lumbering, old sofa-chair, near the fireplace. Its back was rather towards me, but I could not be mistaken; it turned slowly round, and, merciful heavens! there was the stony face, with its infernal lineaments of malignity and despair, gloating on me. There was now no doubt as to its consciousness of my presence, and the hellish malice with which it was animated, for it arose, and drew close to the bedside. There was a rope about its neck, and the other end, coiled up, it held stiffly in its hand.

"My good angel nerved me for this horrible crisis. I remained for some seconds transfixed by the gaze of this tremendous phantom. He came close to the bed, and appeared on the point of mounting upon it. The next instant I was upon the floor at the far side, and in a moment more was, I don't know how, upon the lobby.

"But the spell was not yet broken; the valley of the shadow of death was not yet traversed. The abhorred phantom was before me there; it was standing near the banisters, stooping a little, and with one end of the rope round its own neck, was poising a noose at the other, as if to throw over mine; and while engaged in this baleful pantomime, it wore a smile so sensual, so unspeakably dreadful, that my senses were nearly overpowered. I saw and remember nothing more, until I found myself in your room.

"I had a wonderful escape, Dick—there is no disputing *that*—an escape for which, while I live, I shall bless the mercy of heaven. No one can conceive or imagine what it is for flesh and blood to stand in the presence of such a thing, but one who has had the terrific experience. Dick, Dick, a shadow has passed over me—a chill has crossed my blood and marrow, and I will never be the same again—never, Dick—never!"

Our handmaid, a mature girl of five-and-forty, as I have said, stayed her hand, as Tom's story proceeded, and by little and little drew near to us, with open mouth, and her brows contracted over her little, beady black eyes, till stealing a glance over her shoulder now and then, she established herself close behind us. During the relation, she had made various earnest comments, in an undertone; but these and her ejaculations, for the sake of brevity and simplicity, I have omitted in my narration.

"It's often I heard tell of it," she now said, "but I never believed it rightly till now—though, indeed, why should not I? Does not my mother, down there in the lane, know quare stories, God bless us, beyant telling about it? But you ought not to have slept in the back bedroom. She was loath to let me be going in and out of that room even in the day time, let alone for any Christian to spend the night in it; for sure she says it was his own bedroom."

"*Whose* own bedroom?" we asked, in a breath.

"Why, *his* — the ould Judge's — Judge Horrock's, to be sure, God rest his sowl;" and she looked fearfully round.

"Amen!" I muttered. "But did he die there?"

"Die there! No, not quite *there*," she said. "Shure, was not it over the banisters he hung himself, the ould sinner, God be merciful to us all? and was not it in the alcove they found the handles of the skipping-rope cut off, and the knife where he was settling the cord, God bless us, to hang himself with? It was his housekeeper's daughter owned the rope, my mother often told me, and the child never throve after, and used to be starting up out of her sleep, and screeching in the night time, wid dhrames and frights that cum an her; and they said how it was the sperrit of the ould Judge that was tormentin' her; and she used to be roaring and yelling out to hould back the big ould fellow with the crooked neck; and then she'd screech 'Oh, the master! the master! he's stampin' at me, and beckoning to me! Mother, darling, don't let me go!' And so the poor crathure died at last, and the docthers said it was wather on the brain, for it was all they could say."

"How long ago was all this?" I asked.

"Oh, then, how would I know?" she answered. "But it must be a wonderful long time ago, for the housekeeper was an ould woman, with a pipe in her mouth, and not a tooth left, and betther nor eighty years ould when my mother was first married; and they said she was a rale buxom, fine-dressed woman when the ould Judge come to his end; an', indeed, my mother's not far from eighty years ould herself this day; and what made it worse for the unnatural ould villain, God rest his soul, to frighten the little girl out of the world the way he did, was what was mostly thought and believed by every one. My mother says how the poor little crathure was his own child; for he was by all accounts an ould villain every way, an' the hangin'est judge that ever was known in Ireland's ground."

From what you said about the danger of sleeping in that bedroom," said I, "I suppose there were stories about the ghost having appeared there to others."

"Well, there *was* things said—quare things, surely," she answered, as it seemed, with some reluctance. "And why would not there? Sure was it not up in that same room he slept for more than twenty years? and was it not in the *alcove* he got the rope ready that done his own business at last, the way he done many a betther man's in his lifetime?—and was not the body lying in the same bed afther death, and put in the coffin there, too, and carried out to his grave from it in Pether's churchyard, afther the coroner was done? But there was quare stories — my mother has them all— about how one Nicholas Spaight got into trouble on the head of it."

"And what did they say of this Nicholas Spaight?" I asked.

"Oh, for that matther, it's soon told," she answered.

And she certainly did relate a very strange story, which so piqued my curiosity, that I took occasion to visit the ancient lady, her mother, from whom I learned many very curious particulars. Indeed, I am tempted to tell the tale, but my fingers are weary, and I must defer it. But if you wish to hear it another time, I shall do my best.

When we had heard the strange tale I have *not* told you, we put one or two further questions to her about the alleged spectral visitations, to which the house had, ever since the death of the wicked old Judge, been subjected.

"No one ever had luck in it," she told us. "There was always cross accidents, sudden deaths, and short times in it. The first that tuck it was a family—I forget their name—but at any rate there was two young ladies and their papa. He was about sixty, and a stout healthy gentleman as you'd wish to see at that age. Well, he slept in that unlucky back bedroom;

and, God between us an' harm! sure enough he was found dead one morning, half out of the bed, with his head as black as a sloe, and swelled like a puddin', hanging down near the floor. It was a fit, they said. He was as dead as a mackerel, and so *he* could not say what it was; but the ould people was all sure that it was nothing at all but the ould Judge, God bless us! that frightened him out of his senses and his life together.

"Some time after there was a rich old maiden lady took the house. I don't know which room *she* slept in, but she lived alone; and at any rate, one morning, the servants going down early to their work, found her sitting on the passage-stairs, shivering and talkin' to herself, quite mad; and never a word more could any of *them* or her friends get from her ever afterwards but, 'Don't ask me to go, for I promised to wait for him.' They never made out from her who it was she meant by *him*, but of course those that knew all about the ould house were at no loss for the meaning of all that happened to her.

"Then afterwards, when the house was let out in lodgings, there was Micky Byrne that took the same room, with his wife and three little children; and sure I heard Mrs. Byrne myself telling how the children used to be lifted up in the bed at night, she could not see by what mains; and how they were starting and screeching every hour, just all as one as the housekeeper's little girl that died, till at last one night poor Micky had a dhrop in him, the way he used now and again; and what do you think, in the middle of the night he thought he heard a noise on the stairs, and being in liquor, nothing less id do him but out he must go himself to see what was wrong. Well, after that, all she ever heard of him was himself sayin' 'Oh, God!' and a tumble that shook the very house; and there, sure enough, he was lying on the lower stairs, under the lobby, with his neck smashed double undher him, where he was flung over the banisters."

Then the handmaiden added—

"I'll go down to the lane, and send up Joe Gavvey to pack up the rest of the taythings, and bring all the things across to your new lodgings."

And so we all sallied out together, each of us breathing more freely, I have no doubt, as we crossed that ill-omened threshold for the last time.

Now, I may add thus much, in compliance with the immemorial usage of the realm of fiction, which sees the hero not only through his adventures, but fairly out of the world. You must have perceived that what the flesh, blood, and bone hero of romance proper is to the regular compounder of fiction, this old house of brick, wood, and mortar is to the humble recorder of this true tale. I, therefore, relate, as in duty bound, the catastrophe which ultimately befell it, which was simply this—that about two years subsequently to my story it was taken by a quack doctor, who called himself Baron Duhlstoerf, and filled the parlour windows with bottles of indescribable horrors preserved in brandy, and the newspapers with the usual grandiloquent and mendacious advertisements. This gentleman among his virtues did not reckon sobriety, and one night, being overcome with much wine, he set fire to his bed curtains, partially burned himself, and totally consumed the house. It was afterwards rebuilt, and for a time an undertaker established himself in the premises.

I have now told you my own and Tom's adventures, together with some valuable collateral particulars; and having acquitted myself of my engagement, I wish you a very good night, and pleasant dreams.